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ZOLA FIFTY YEARS AFTER

CALVIN S. BROWN

FIFTY years ago Emile Zola was at the height of his powers and his reputation. Nine years earlier he had finished the monumental cycle of twenty novels about the Rougon-Macquart family, and had immediately plunged into "The Three Cities," a series of novels in which a priest, by his successive experiences in Lourdes, Rome, and Paris, finally rejects dogma and superstition to embrace scientific rationalism as the only sane and fruitful basis for human life. Zola had already completed three novels of a new series, "The Four Gospels," in which this priest's sons founded their own utopias based on their father's final articles of faith—*Fécondité, Travail,* and *Vérité.* While working on the "Cities" and the "Gospels" he had championed the innocence of Dreyfus, following up the dramatic rhetoric of "J'accuse" with months of hard and sometimes spectacular work and, after a year's banishment in England, returning to see the case through to a moral victory. *Vérité* was about to appear as a serial, and Zola was at work planning the last of the "Gospels," a novel called *Justice* which was to show the extinction of war by the growth of a sense of justice among nations.

This was the situation when he and his wife arrived at their house in Paris for a visit in the fall. Since the weather was damp and chilly, they had a fire built in the bedroom, but with some difficulty, for the fireplace did not draw well. (It turned out later that the flue was badly clogged with rubble from some repairs which had been made during the summer.) Once during the night they woke up, feeling dizzy and strange, but they decided that the trouble was due to something they had eaten, and Zola did not wish to disturb the servants. Next morning, September 29, 1902, they found him dead on the floor, where he had apparently fallen in his unconscious struggle for air. Mme Zola, still on the bed, was above the deadliest concentration of carbon monoxide and though unconscious, made a good recovery.

Zola's name is familiar enough today, but it is usually associated with a legendary figure compounded out of the attacks of his enemies and a few dramatic events in his life, such as the Dreyfus case. Among English-speaking people Tennyson's stupid (or was it merely ignorant?) reference to "wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism" has probably done a good deal to set the pattern, and *Nana* has been a perennial *succès de scandale.* But the simple fact is that most people who refer glibly to Zola have never read him. And there is no other way to

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know him, for his books are his life. He was not a public crusader, though he did champion Manet and Dreyfus. He was not a journalist, though he wrote a good many newspaper articles and most of his novels were first published as serials. (He once said that no decent man could read his morning paper without turning pale with fury.) Nor was he a dashing man-about-town who put his reminiscences into novels. He was a short-sighted, stocky, asthmatic little man with an almost incredible capacity for the dogged, hard work of serious writing, and his relaxations were of a quiet, domestic kind. As a matter of fact, except for comparative wealth in his later years, he lived much as do any number of French clerks and office-workers.

It is in the novels, then, that we really find him. And that is as it should be, for if he had not written them he would be of no interest to us today. The literary historian is aware that Zola's literary ancestry can be traced through Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert, and the Goncourts, and that the naturalism of which he is often considered to be the leader was no invention of his. Like most great writers, he lives by what he wrote, not by the tricks of the trade which he devised.

The great innovation which Zola thought he made really has nothing to do with the technique of fiction—and is a dead-end at best. In the Rougon-Macquart series he set out to "study" heredity in an extensive family, with the idea that he was performing experimental science by *inventing* a character with a given heredity and then seeing how he would turn out—in a work of fiction. If this seems too naïve to be credible, we should remember the "scientific experiments" which many of our addle-pated educationists are solemnly performing today. At least, Zola's alleged experiments did no harm. The family is a useful device for unifying the novels of the series, and the working out of the heredity of its members was doubtless an aid to Zola's imagination and structural sense, but the reader can ignore the biological thesis with little loss.

Zola's devotion to science is nevertheless basic in his work. It was a part of his literary credo that fiction should be objectively accurate and solidly built. His methods of work were essentially those of the laboratory, with none of the fine frenzy of his romantic predecessors. His plans, notes, documentation, and research for a novel often run to considerably greater length than the novel itself. Fortunately, these dossiers are almost all preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and they make a fascinating study in themselves. When Zola decided on a new novel, he based it on an idea or theme, and the plot was a secondary matter to be worked out later. He would sit down and discuss the matter with himself on paper, with frequent notes such

as these: "No, that won't do—better work it out this way," or, "Direct connection needed between these households—to be thought up later," or, "The problem is going to be how to go into enough detail without being tedious." He would settle on a general theme—often a particular aspect of the nation, such as peasant life, railroading, the department store, the stock exchange—and then work out the main lines of a plot. He also prepared a list of characters, with the age, occupation, and principal physical and mental traits of each. While all this was going on, there was usually a parallel and extensive study of the subject in hand. In preparing for *L'Assommoir,* for example, Zola had to study the tools and processes of sheet-metal roofers, of laundries and public washing-houses, of bolt-forgers, and of gold-chain makers. He had to take notes on slum apartment-houses and read the medical literature on alcoholism—and so well did he succeed here that French medical students are sometimes referred to Coupeau in this novel as a classic case of *delirium tremens.* Above all, he had to study the vernacular of the Parisian labourer, both from direct observation and from philological compilations. His younger friends and disciples did a good deal of miscellaneous leg-work for him. Frequently he would write a note from Médan asking Céard or Huysmans to find out whether the architect for a provincial diocese could live in Paris and have private clients there, or just what the formalities were when an unwanted child was deposited at the state orphanage. In his passion for strict accuracy Zola wanted to interview everyone who could help him, from prostitutes to popes—but the pope refused an audience.

When all this material was well in hand, Zola wrote a detailed chapter-by-chapter plan of the entire novel. Then he sat down methodically and wrote the novel through from start to finish in daily stints, almost without corrections and with nothing which could possibly be called revision. The whole process sounds more like baking a cake than writing a novel, and the analogy will hold further in that a good cake requires a great deal of systematic measuring, mixing, and timing, but these activities do not give the finished product a pedantic flavour.

Sometimes the recipe is so prosaic that its discovery shocks the guests at the feast. In describing the luxuriant abandoned park known as Le Paradou, Zola devotes considerable attention to the sinister-looking aromatic rock-plants, listing them by families and describing their typical characteristics. When we look at the manuscript notes for *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret,* we find a résumé by families excerpted (we should have guessed!) from a systematic botanical treatise. Zola

even struck out the names of the plants, one by one, as he used them, to keep from accidentally repeating himself. Yet, surprisingly, the passage in the novel, read in its full context, is effective even after we are aware of the trick.

How can this be possible? Or, to put the question in general terms, how can work so mechanically contrived be alive and powerful? What does Zola have that most of his imitators, especially the sociological, documentary novelists, utterly lack?

One quality is human sympathy—sympathy with individual human beings. The sociologist and his literary followers are concerned with groups, classes, professions, ages—all sorts of statistical abstractions in terms of which men and women may be classified. They aim at the average, and the statistical average may have no relevance to any individual in the group. Zola always writes about persons, never about people. And this sympathy leads him, in his best work, to enter into his characters and think with their minds, regardless of his own convictions. Zola condemned the cult of the Virgin as a "religion of death," in direct opposition to his own faith in life, yet he can enter into Serge Mouret's devotion to Mary and reproduce the touching and passionate sincerity of his prayers to her. This sympathy is broad enough to include all types from a charming, quiet store-clerk like Denise to the crooked speculator and financier Saccard—"the old corsair," as Zola calls him—and even the homicidal maniac Jacques Lantier. It is a quality far beyond the objectivity which is demanded by the naturalistic school and which some writers apparently take to mean mere indifference.

Indeed Zola's sympathy extends beyond characters and persons, to animals and things. He never lost the child's interest in everything which Wordsworth correctly identified as the essential quality of a poetic imagination. With all his materialism and scientific accuracy of detail, he was a poet at heart, and the lyricism with which he described the machinery of a mine or of a coup on the stock market, a fish market or a butcher shop, a locomotive or a barnyard, is equal to that which he devotes to such traditionally poetic subjects as flower markets, cavalry charges, and medieval legends of the saints. This combination of zest with mundane fact should not seem remarkable, but it does, primarily because of an unfortunate split in our ways of thinking during the last couple of centuries. The romantic makes the primrose something more than a primrose, and in his lofty botanical ignorance frequently (I suspect) makes it something different, such as a daffodil. The botanist is inclined to make it an arrangement of labelled parts. Zola simply wants to understand it and appreciate it

at the same time. His zest includes knowledge as well as experience.

This poetic flair sometimes leads to virtuosity, to the setting of a problem for solution. The savage and untranslatable poetry of the Parisian argot in which *L'Assommoir* is told is a magnificently successful example. There are, however, some obvious purple patches, such as the symphony of cheeses in *Ventre de Paris* and the description of the candle-light procession in *Lourdes*. There are also occasional structural stunts, such as the five sections of *Une Page d'amour,* each consisting of five chapters and ending with a panorama of Paris under a different light. Sometimes he liked to give his faithful readers an example of what he could do, as in the three extended and totally different child-birth scenes in three different novels—the peasant whose delivery coincides with that of the cow, the pampered, delicate girl for whom child-birth becomes a desperate struggle for life, and the stupid and ignorant servant-girl who bears her bastard alone in a garret, takes it out and abandons it, and returns almost immediately to work.

But this art for art's sake is rare in Zola. Fundamentally, he is moved by a deep and abiding faith in life, in man, in human dignity, and he expressed this faith specifically through his Doctor Pascal, for the benefit of those who had so misread him as to see in the Rougon-Macquart novels only baseness, despair, violence, and obscenity. The views falsely attributed to Zola by his critics collapse before Pascal's explanation of those views, in much the same way that the misreadings of William Faulkner are demolished by his own statement in the Stockholm address. The charges levelled at both writers were substantially the same, and the writers' own replies have a great deal in common.

Unfortunately, Zola did not let the matter rest with Pascal, and in the novels of the "Gospels" the faith in life, humanity, and the future became tediously and garrulously explicit. But even these later propaganda novels are remarkable achievements in comparison with the general run of similar productions.

Probably the best tribute to Zola came from a surprising source. Zola always attacked the Church, with its "religion of death." He tried to interview Pope Leo XIII, and, failing, still presented him in *Rome,* by name, as an imposing figure in some respects, but a hopeless anachronism crushed under a dead and useless tradition. In the "Gospels" he had gone on to demand the destruction of the Church as necessary for the progress of mankind. But when news of Zola's death was brought to Leo XIII fifty years ago, the old pontiff mused a moment, and said, "He was an enemy of the Church, but he was an open and honest enemy. May his soul rest in heaven!"

JUSTICE AND LOVE IN *OTHELLO*

WINIFRED M. T. NOWOTTNY

IT is a commonplace of criticism of *Othello* that the Moor, entering in Act V to the murder of Desdemona, sees himself as a minister of Justice. It is apparent that this act is full of references to judgment and of images drawn from it. Yet it is usually assumed that this is but an additional turn of the screw, a means of throwing an even more lurid light on Othello's crime against the innocent Desdemona. It is the purpose of this article to put the case that the insistence on justice in Act V of *Othello* is the culmination to which the drama as a whole is designed to lead, and moreover that a fuller perception of the excellence of the dramatic economy will follow upon the recognition that Shakespeare intends in this play an evaluation of justice in its relation to love.

In *Othello* jealousy is treated as a state in which man experiences the opposition of two kinds of belief—belief in "evidence" and belief in the person one loves—and the opposition of the value of justice (as he conceives it) to the value of love. What is tragic in *Othello* derives from these oppositions. The character of Othello serves but to bring them on; jealousy is the stage on which they stand forth. For in jealousy of this nature and magnitude, justice and love, which in other situations may be conceived of as parallels, meet. It is therefore no accident that *Othello* is full of allusions to justice and of metaphors drawn from it, since, in the jealousy of Othello, the value of justice and the value of love become openly contestant and reveal their essential incompatibility. The trend of the play becomes clear when one considers the difference between two judgments Othello makes, the one on Cassio:

> Cassio, I love thee;
> But never more be officer of mine,

the other on Desdemona: "I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee." The judgment on Cassio can be made, though reluctantly, yet without personal conflict, by subscribing to the idea that justice and love are compatible values; but the judgment on Desdemona is preceded by the personal experience of the conflict of those values, and represents a decision between them.

It is possible to argue that the contention of love and justice begins, in this play, with Brabantio's attempt to bring love under the law, from which attempt it follows that the quality of Othello's and Desdemona's love is declared in a kind of trial scene. Brabantio's accusa-

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tion and the subsequent inquiry might, it is true, be dismissed as being no more than a means of providing for the necessary exposition of what has gone before. Shakespeare's intentions in this matter are debatable: it could be that the excellence of the device for expository purposes was the whole of his reason for adopting it, or it could be that he saw this device as being "fit not only to advance the action of a special plot and to exhibit certain traits in particular characters, but also to prompt in an audience's mind a special vein of semiconscious comment or a special mood of reverie about certain general ideas."[1] But whatever we make of Brabantio, we cannot deny significance to Cassio's part in illuminating Othello's attitude to justice and love, since Shakespeare uses him, in III, iv, to point a clear contrast between Othello's attitude to these two values, and Desdemona's. In this scene Cassio asks Desdemona to intercede for the rescinding of Othello's judgment upon him, and weighs his chances of reinstatement in Othello's love:

> If my offence be of such mortal kind
> That nor my service past, nor present sorrows,
> Nor purposed merit in futurity,
> Can ransom me into his love again. . . .

In contrast to this reference to Othello's hierarchy of values, in which justice stands higher than love, there follows Desdemona's reflection on the "unkindness" of Othello and then her immediate penetration of her own absurdity in submitting love to the processes of judgment and thereby constituting herself simultaneously plaintiff, witness, suborner, and judge:

> Beshrew me much, Emilia,
> I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,
> Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
> But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,
> And he's indicted falsely.

The full development of this theme does not come until Act V, but there Othello and Desdemona play exactly the same roles, he as Justice, she as Love:

> EMIL. O, who hath done this deed?
> DES. Nobody; I myself. Farewell:
> Commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell! . . .
> OTH. She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell:
> 'Twas I that kill'd her.
> EMIL. O, the more angel she,
> And you the blacker devil!

[1] C. E. Montague, "The Literary Play," *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, II, 83.

This theme, made explicit in Act V, is implicit in all that leads to Act V. In particular, it shapes the treatment of Iago and Othello in Act III. For the very setting of the stage for conflict, the creation of the situation which brings it about (Iago's temptation of Othello) is done in terms of the differing processes pertaining to judgment and love, and emphasizes the difference between the kind of belief relevant to the forming of judgments and the other kind of belief characteristic of love. Shakespeare chooses to make Iago's success depend upon the fatal interaction between two things: the weakness of testimony as such (which is Iago's strength), and the strength of love (which, fitted into the context of Iago, becomes its weakness). The first dialogue of the temptation falls into two parts, separated by Othello's long speech on jealousy (III, iii, 176–92).[2] In the first part Iago exploits the trickiness of testimony; in the second part he exploits the generosity of love; what is fatal to Othello is the conjunction of the two. It should be stressed that Shakespeare has taken this way of bringing about Othello's mistrust because it allows him to manifest in dramatic terms the pitfalls of reasoning about love and of admitting testimony against it. He shows the process of false testimony succeeding and specifically refers to the reasons why it is impossible to assess it. He posits an Iago entrenched in false opinion; he refers particularly to the impossibility of discriminating between true and false by considering the witness's manner; he shows how the very negatives of testimony can be converted into positives (as Iago, having no proof, makes capital of a feigned reluctance to speak); further, he points to the element of construction inseparable from testimony (when Iago protests that he "imperfectly conceits" the significance of his "scattering and unsure observance" and in so doing is able to divulge exactly what is in his mind). In short, Iago's testimony is strong in proportion as all testimony is weak; his tricks are possible because of the trickiness of testimony itself. Further, in Othello's speech of protest, Shakespeare adverts to the irony at the root of all these ironies: it is useless for Othello to say "I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove," since infidelity does not necessarily produce evidence of itself and fidelity cannot be put to the proof.

Othello's speech over, the dialogue enters its second phase, in which Iago makes capital of the generosity of love. The characteristic irony of this part of the dialogue is prepared for by Iago's words,

> I would not have your free and noble nature,
> Out of self-bounty, be abused; look to 't.

[2]References are to the Globe Shakespeare.

It is precisely this self-bounty of love (both Desdemona's and Othello's) which he now proceeds to abuse. Desdemona's love had been strong enough to be its own conscience, and is therefore open to another verdict in another context:

> IAGO. She did deceive her father, marrying you;
> And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
> She loved them most.
> OTH. And so she did.

Again, Iago's well-timed "My lord, I see you're moved," makes Othello answer, in loyalty to Desdemona, "I do not think but Desdemona's honest"; he cannot, immediately upon that, challenge Iago for proof. Now, significantly, Othello takes the lead, because it is now the finest part of self-bounty (Iago is not fitted to understand it) which plays him wholly into Iago's hands. Desdemona's love had transcended all obstacles in a magnificent departure from ordinary "nature." It had baffled Brabantio by its unreasonableness. Othello in turn, in self-deprecation, makes the mistake of bringing it to the bar of reason:

> And yet, how nature erring from itself—

He does not complete the thought, but its completion is apparent: nature, having left its course, might no doubt lose that fine exaltation and subside to its course again; it would be quite reasonable to suppose that Desdemona had ceased to love. Here for a moment Iago loses track of Othello and takes this to refer to "foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural," but hastily covers up his mistake and achieves an approximation, though a base one, to Othello's thought:

> Her will, recoiling to her better judgement,
> May . . .
> happily repent.

Othello dismisses him, but the mischief is done, as his soliloquy shows.

The way in which Shakespeare has directed the dialogue to illuminate the weaknesses of testimony shows that this scene is much more than a device to bring on Othello's conflict. Obviously it was within Shakespeare's power to have manufactured evidence more credible than Iago's bare tale; in *Cymbeline* and *Much Ado about Nothing* he did manufacture it. Here he chooses to make Iago succeed by reason of the gulf between likelihood and love and by reason of the tragic conjunction set up when the nature and processes of love become involved with the utterly different nature and processes of judgment. At this point the audience may, already, feel (to use the words of Shakespeare in another play) that it

aches
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion
May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take
The one by the other.[3]

It is here, however, that Shakespeare parts company with some of his critics (those who debate whether sufficient reason is made out for Othello's believing Iago). It is not my purpose to join in the critical battle over this ground. It need only be observed, in so far as some critics have laboured the irrationality of Othello, that Shakespeare seems to have taken it for granted that jealousy *is* irrational (to judge from Emilia's comment that men "are not ever jealous for the cause"); on the other hand, in so far as some critics have laboured the inevitability of Othello's believing Iago (as Coleridge did) it seems relevant to observe that such critics seem concerned to defend Othello from the charge of *ignoble* irrationality and that this defence too is foreign to Shakespeare's presentation of the case. Shakespeare's own view may be deduced from the way in which he deliberately draws attention, at this very point in the play, to the fact that immunity from jealousy has as little to do with reason as jealousy itself. For when Desdemona enters, as Othello comes to the end of his soliloquy, Iago's edifice trembles:

Desdemona comes:
If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!
I'll not believe 't.

Immunity from jealousy would lie in the continuance of this simple act of faith. Othello cannot maintain this faith, but if he could, it would still be as non-rational as the jealousy from whose stigma some critics have been anxious to defend him. Shakespeare at this point deliberately forces upon the audience the question, In what strength could Othello reject Iago? The answer would seem to be, By an affirmation of faith which is beyond reason, by the act of choosing to believe in Desdemona. Shakespeare's point is that love is beyond reason. Desdemona's love for Othello has been made "unreasonable" in a way which permits discussion of it in the drama, as when Brabantio tries to bring it to the bar of reason and to punishment by the law, but Othello's race and strangeness (which constitute Brabantio's case) are after all only dramatic heightenings of a simple truism which it is Shakespeare's peculiar excellence to have thought remarkable enough for repeated dramatization: the truism that love, any love, is a miracle.

[3] *Coriolanus*, III, i, 108-12.

Being a daily miracle, it is not often seen as miraculous; to arrive at that valuation of it costs something, as in *King Lear*; to fail to arrive at it costs more, as in *Othello*. With love, reason and justice have ultimately nothing to do.

There is another play of Shakespeare's in which this idea again takes the dramatic form of jealousy and judgment. Leontes is jealous. He brings his wife to judgment. In the trial scene she describes her helplessness in terms wholly applicable to the situation in *Othello*:

> Since what I am to say must be but that
> Which contradicts my accusation and
> The testimony on my part no other
> But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me
> To say "not guilty": mine integrity
> Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it,
> Be so received. . . .
> You, my lord, best know,
> Who least will seem to do so. . . .

Marital fidelity is the case *par excellence* where the only protection of the accused is that intuitive belief in her integrity which should have precluded accusation, an intuitive belief which is irrelevant to justice, as justice to it. To inquire what Shakespeare takes to be the nature of this intuitive belief will therefore be of importance to the understanding of *Othello*.

The best commentary on Othello's "I'll not believe 't" is to be found in *Troilus and Cressida*. There Troilus actually sees Cressida's perfidy. He admits the fact:

> Ulyss. All's done, my lord.
> Tro. It is.

But he finds none the less that his belief in Cressida does not change:

> . . . if I tell how these two did co-act,
> Shall I not lie in publishing a truth?
> Sith yet there is a credence in my heart,
> An esperance so obstinately strong,
> That doth invert the attest of eyes and ears,
> As if those organs had deceptious functions,
> Created only to calumniate. . . . (V, ii, 118-24)

And again:

> O madness of discourse,
> That cause sets up with and against itself!
> Bi-fold authority! where reason can revolt
> Without perdition, and loss assume all reason
> Without revolt: this is, and is not, Cressid.

> Within my soul there doth conduce a fight
> Of this strange nature that a thing inseparate
> Divides more wider than the sky and earth. . . .[4] (V, ii, 142-9)

Between the assent of reason to evidence, and the consent of love to a change of belief about its object, there is a great gulf fixed, and to cross it is to experience the terrible passage from one organization of personality to another. Sonnet 138 suggests that it may even seem preferable to descend into the gulf and dwell there:

> When my love swears that she is made of truth
> I do believe her, though I know she lies. . . .

Othello, incapable of this conscious complexity, wishes that at least he might have been deceived:

> What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?
> I saw 't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:
> I slept the next night well, was free and merry;
> I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips. . . . (III, iii, 338-41)

Troilus is aware of the act of choice inherent in ceasing to believe and of the agony that goes with it; Othello, though he understands nothing of this, cannot avoid experiencing it. This is shown in III, iii, 444 ff., where Othello, convinced that Iago's tale is true, acts in gesture the emotional choice:

> Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;
> All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.
> 'Tis gone.

But it is not. It is impossible to make that choice without a reorientation of personality, and therefore the gesture is followed by the terrible images in which he calls upon himself for a reversal in the depth of his nature and the dethroning of the might and dominion of love:

> Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
> Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
> To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught. . . .

The poetry, markedly, does not describe this change as taking place of itself; it shows Othello commanding it to take place. For in truth the change of belief which Othello thinks inseparable from his acceptance of Iago's story is not inseparable—it is an emotional *non sequitur*. Othello does not, like Troilus, recognize and define the separateness, but he feels and acts according to its laws: he has to *command* the

[4]For a fuller treatment of the importance of this scene, see Charles Williams, *The English Poetic Mind* (Oxford, 1932), 58-61.

emotional "effect" to accompany its "cause." The paradox illustrates the truth of Troilus' discovery that there is in the soul a "bi-fold authority"—on the one hand, reason, and on the other the naked will to believe by which the categories of "reasonable" and "unreasonable" are altogether transcended. Othello is not the man to admit the possibility of a "madness of discourse, That cause sets up with and against itself," but this does not alter the fact that his experience, like that of Troilus, involves the conflict between two images of the woman he loves.

Shakespeare has already shown, earlier in the same scene, that what Othello thinks of as uncertainty of mind is in reality an intolerable emotional tension which demands violent expression:

> I think my wife be honest and think she is not;
> I think that thou art just and think thou art not.
> I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh
> As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
> As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,
> Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
> I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!

Here we have, first, Othello's attempt to interpret his conflict as uncertainty of mind, and his desire to end it (as he thinks he could) by proof. This counterfeit of the problem is followed immediately by the real problem, the two images of Desdemona: "fresh as Dian's visage"; "begrimed and black." From this tension of incompatibles springs the impulse to violence. With "Would I were satisfied!" he reverts to the illusion that proof will quiet that volcano whose raging we have glimpsed. The very form of this speech, enclosing within two patent rationalizations a reality of experience betrayed directly in imagery, shows that the inner conflict between two modes of belief about Desdemona is the heart of the matter and that Othello, in interpreting it to himself as uncertainty of mind, is simply providing the conflict with a surface rationalization. And it is the urgency of the conflict and of the resultant impulse to end it by violent action that explains Othello's snatching at Iago's lies about Cassio and the handkerchief: by so doing, he can turn the force of his emotions into the current of revenge. It is significant that the image in which he expresses his determination to be revenged (the image of the Pontic sea) contains the promise of release: he promises himself a revenge as "capable and wide" as the Propontic and the Hellespont.

It is one of the finest strokes in the construction of the play that Shakespeare puts the vow of revenge before the test of the handkerchief. By so doing, he makes clear in the action what he has already

suggested in the poetry: that the idea of revenge, though it seems to Othello to follow from what he now thinks of Desdemona and offers him the illusion of release from the conflict of his emotions, is not in fact Othello's whole bent. If he could unify himself by revenge, that would be one way out, but he cannot; the test of the handkerchief is a desperate attempt to unify himself in the opposite way—by having Desdemona prove that what Iago has said is false. Othello's description to Desdemona of the mystic nature of the handkerchief—

> A sibyl . . .
> In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
> The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;
> And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
> Conserved of maidens' hearts—

is not an irrelevance; he is in reality asking Desdemona to restore to him the sacredness of love.[5] After the failure of this attempt, he is not seen until Act IV, and Act IV concentrates on showing the dreadful interim within Othello when the disjunction of his personality rages for expression and cannot find the means.

It is in Act IV that the nature of the action affords indisputable proof that Shakespeare has in this play a unified design which utterly transcends that concern for immediate theatrical effect which some critics would have us impute to him, for in this act "theatrical effect" is least satisfactory as an explanation of Shakespeare's choice of episodes. Othello falls in a fit; he strikes Desdemona in public; he goes to her as to a prostitute. If these things are chosen only for their immediate effect, the choice is extraordinary, for Act IV is, in itself, hardly to be borne. Its effect is accurately described by the words of De Broglie: "Le spectateur contemple ce tableau, non point avec cette curiosité inquiète qui passe tour à tour de la crainte à l'espoir, mais . . . avec quelque chose de cette angoisse inexprimable qui s'empare de nous lorsque, dans une cour de justice, nous assistons aux vains efforts de malheureux entraînés vers une condamnation fatale et indubitable."[6] This is not an effect which Shakespeare often risked. The other tragedies increase in illumination as the end approaches; even *Macbeth,* nearest to *Othello* in the increasing denigration of the hero, looks forward in Act IV to a better future—the line of Banquo passes before our eyes, and as the act closes,

[5]I am happy to find independent corroboration of this suggestion in R. B. Heilman's essay, "The Lear World" in *English Institute Essays: 1948* (New York, 1949), 49: "Symbolically . . . [Othello] is in anguish crying for the restoration of the myth of love, for its magic—non-rational, transcendent, mysterious. . . ."

[6]Quoted in the New Variorum *Othello* (2nd ed.), 452.

> Macbeth
> Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
> Put on their instruments.

In *Othello* Act IV is wellnigh insupportable. Is not the reason that it is the inescapable outcome of Act III and, more important, the indispensable preparation for Act V, in that the intolerableness of Act IV is the means by which the audience is made to experience, like Othello himself, the necessity for release? The perfection of Shakespeare's art here consists in the economy by which he brings about this participation of the audience in the hero's tragedy: the violence in the action, which creates tension in the audience, is motivated within Othello himself by *his* tension, a tension which is the result of his failure in Act III to unify himself either by the vow of revenge or by making Desdemona restore to him his undesecrated love.

When Act IV opens, it immediately becomes clear that Othello's decision to revenge has in no way touched his real problem. He has even forgotten how he decided: when Iago reminds him of the handkerchief, he says,

> O! it comes o'er my memory,
> As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
> Boding to all.

But though indecision is over, tension is at its greatest; Othello now has the experience as it really is—the tension between two Desdemonas, between two Othellos. (Othello's image in IV, i, 192-4, "my heart is turned to stone, I strike it and it hurts my hand" is the equivalent, in the sphere of the emotions, of Troilus' "madness of discourse, That cause sets up with and against itself"; with Othello as with Troilus "a thing inseparate Divides more wider than the sky and earth.") The episodes of Act IV manifest and communicate this tension by the dreadful spectacle of Othello's attempts to escape from it. The pitch rises as his ways of seeking relief draw, horribly, ever nearer to Desdemona and to the deepest intimacies of love. The falling in a fit is a temporary way of not bearing the tension. That, shocking as it is, affects only himself. The next way is the striking of Desdemona. His striking her in public (for in their private interview there is nothing of this) is a symbolic act: a calling the world's attention to the intolerableness of what he suffers by the intolerableness of what he does. The treating Emilia as a brothel-keeper is an expression of the division in him at its deepest level: to go to his wife as to a prostitute is to try to act out what the situation means to him. Already Othello is driven to symbolize his conflict in act—to seek actions that will express the im-

possible. But none of these things will serve. Othello is not seen full face again until, in Act V, he finds the perfect symbolic act: to kill, not in hate but in love.

The scene of the murder of Desdemona is a visible demonstration of the laws inherent in the process that led up to it. This is a drama of an error of judgment, the error being in the application of judgment to love. It is not, however, surprising, that the relation of Act V to all that goes before has been imperfectly seen, for the perception of that relation depends upon our recognizing the terrible propositions about human justice which Shakespeare laid down for himself to work by: as, that justice, however it is conceived of, cannot be executed in love; that love and justice differ in their natures, their processes, and their conclusions; that justice, though ideally conceived of as an expiating sacrifice or as the only cure for a wound in the fitness of things, may be, in its human origin and motivation, indistinguishable from man's need to find redress for what he cannot bear to find in human nature; that, finally, the man who accepts justice as the supreme value in life will, if he be wholly consistent, at last execute himself. I believe all these propositions to be implicit in the play. If their starkness should cause us to deny them or simply not to see that such questions arise, then Act V cannot be seen as the logical outcome of Acts I-IV. The fact that Othello perpetrates injustice in no way weakens the significance of Act V, for the play turns upon the conflict between justice and love, not upon the nature of justice itself. No aspect of Othello's experience of that conflict would have been different if Desdemona had in fact been false (though if she had been false, Othello's experience would have been incommunicable to an audience; the audience's participation in his conflict depends upon its having, as he has, two images of her—his image, and the truth).

In Act V, the significance is so entirely fused with the poetry and the action that it is only by faithful attention to these that we can rightly estimate what Shakespeare was about; this is sufficient reason for pondering every phase of the action, and all the meaning that the poetry carries, even at the risk of being thought to consider too closely or of being accused of attempting to explain poetry and genius.

First, then, let us consider the opening soliloquy of Act V, scene ii: "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul. . . ." It is to our great loss that we let these words pass as some oracular utterance not susceptible of commentary. We may begin by inquiring what "cause" meant in Elizabethan English. It meant, first, the accusation or charge against someone, as in *King Lear* (IV, vi, 111-13), "What was thy cause?

Adultery? . . . die for adultery! No." Secondly, in an even more specialized sense, it meant the matter about which a person went to law, or the case of one party in a suit. In a third sense, it meant the end in view or the object for which a deed is done. Or again, in a very pregnant sense, it meant good, proper, and adequate ground for action (as Cassio uses the word in "I never gave you cause"). Which of these meanings does Shakespeare intend? He intends the first, the charge against Desdemona; he also intends the second, Othello's case against her; he intends the fourth, in that Othello thinks himself to have good, proper, and adequate ground for action; and indeed he also intends the third, the end to which the action shall be done. The end to which the murder shall be done is, simply, release from the whole agony. In the phrase itself, as in the action it refers to, Othello's complex attitude is unified: Desdemona is guilty and he has a case against her, but what he is about to do is to him an action just in every way, and what he is about to do has a purpose, the making of an atoning sacrifice which shall make all well. The word unites the personal, the social, and the religious aspects of justice, just as the killing is to answer every need of his nature that he recognizes: the need for punishment, for abstract justice, for the restoration of the ideal image of Desdemona by an atoning sacrifice, and, one might add, a need deeper than all these, the need to possess her again—for murder is now the only act of possession open to him.

Knowing how much "cause" means, we can now grasp the whole phrase, "It is the cause." Said thrice, it evidently has depth under depth of meaning for Othello; two ways, at least, in which the phrase has meaning, are apparent. First, it may be taken as the answer to the unspoken question, "What is it that makes me do this?"—"It is the cause." Secondly, the phrase may be interpreted as an utterance of recognition: "it" (the act of killing) "is" (is the same thing as) "the cause" (the whole state of affairs between us). In other words, Othello has found the act which corresponds to all he feels, though what he feels is a complex of opposites, for the act is symbolic; to describe that act he finds the word which means all that the act means, and the syntax which enables him to describe the act as being the same thing as all those opposites he feels, and therefore their expression, and therefore his release. The killing itself is in this sense symbolic: it is an act which stands for all the warring emotions pent up in Othello. These emotions are now fused in a calm of pure concentration on the symbolic act, an act which is the only possible way for Othello to express at once all that Desdemona means and all that he means. He has the

exaltation of having struck a perfect equipoise. But what he is about to do would cease to be an all-embracing symbol if he defined its relevance to any one aspect of the problem: if he were to put the act into defining words, they would break up the symbol, for if the act is vengeance, it cannot be justice or atonement, and if it is any of these, it is not passion; and if it is not all of these, it is not release. Hence Othello's refusal to define:

> Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!—
> It is the cause.

Because of all that "cause" means to Othello, its real emotional meaning is "solution," and because the solution is simply, and as absolute symbol, the act of killing, there is no transition between those words, "It is the cause" and the next, "Yet I'll not shed her blood." It is as though he had said, "The solution is to kill, yet I'll not shed her blood." Then, the moment he looks at Desdemona—at her skin as "smooth as monumental alabaster"—he is forced to give himself a reason why he should destroy her: "Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men." As soon as *one* reason is given, the symbol begins to dissolve, and to stop the dissolution of his symbol, he must cease to see anything but that—and so, "Put out the light, and then put out the light." This again is an act of a purely symbolic nature; again he identifies in one action two entities objectively different but emotionally the same: Desdemona, and the light he extinguishes in order not to see her; indeed, it is as though the parallelism of the two acts constituted their logic. The blackness of the act is matched by the blackness in which alone it can be performed. Othello's state is one in which pattern and relationship take the place of reasoning. As in the parallel, "Put out the light, and then put out the light," so in the whole situation: that an act *fits* is the whole reason for its being done. To kill in love; to revenge by justice; to kill the guilty Desdemona for the honour of the innocent Desdemona, or to sacrifice the innocent Desdemona to atone for her guilt; to torture her because she has tortured him and to torture himself in torturing her—in all this it is the pattern that constitutes the logic, for it is the pattern of his feelings. It is moreover only through pattern and symbol (so tranced is his state) that he can consider the finality of his act:

> If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
> I can again thy former light restore,
> Should I repent me: but once put out thy light. . . .
> When I have pluck'd the rose,
> I cannot give it vital growth again. . . .

As if this achievement of expressing emotion through form were not sufficient, Shakespeare has all the while developed, within the tranced patterns of Othello's utterances, the great impersonal pattern of Justice and Love. It is in the growing intensity of Othello's realization of his continuing love, counterpointed by the growing compulsiveness of the sanctions of justice which he must allege to outdo it, that Shakespeare expresses the major conflict of the drama. Faced by the fact that love continues, even in this extremity, Othello is driven to urge higher and higher the claims of that justice which shall destroy it. Justice has already been called in under its aspect of safeguard of society: "Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men." Love persists. Justice is then called in as an abstract ideal. Love, still, can almost persuade her to break her sword, and hints that the threatened act of destruction is at heart the act of possession, of plucking the rose. Justice, in a final terrifying aggrandisement, claims the ultimate possible sanction, the sanction of love: ". . . this sorrow's heavenly; It strikes where it doth love." The process is complete. Justice overrides love by presenting itself as love. In this parallel ascent, where the claims of justice rise with the claims of love, Shakespeare has manifested their tragic contestation, and through the form of the poetry he has shown how the act of killing is related at one level to the tension of opposites in Othello and at a deeper level to the fundamental and eternal opposition of justice and love.

Desdemona wakes. So must Othello. He had thought to strike in heavenly sorrow; he strikes with "Down, strumpet!" From the height of his intention to the depth of the execution the descent is inevitable: at no point in the dialogue could Desdemona's plea for life produce effects other than it does, for the issue of love against justice is settled now; there must inevitably rise up, within Othello's temple of sacrificial justice, the asseverating wrathful self, accusation and self-vindication streaming from its lips:

> O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart,
> And makest me call what I intend to do
> A murder, which I thought a sacrifice.

It is indeed only the executioner who fully knows the resistance of the sacrificial victim. In human justice as it is commonly ordered the executioner need not question the motive of the judge, nor the judge question his own. With Desdemona, Othello is judge and executioner; he is also plaintiff, and the only possible witness for the defence. In him justice confounds itself by the concentration of all its persons in

one, and in being so confounded by unity, throws into relief the indivisible and unconfounded unity of love.

There remains the revelation of the truth. Justice now comes into its own. In *Measure for Measure,* justice pointed to its impartiality:

> When I, that censure him, do so offend,
> Let mine own judgement pattern out my death. . . .
> (II, i, 29-30)

Othello has killed Desdemona for betraying their love; he kills himself for the same reason. He surveys his life, judges it, passes sentence, and executes it, as long ago he did in Aleppo:

> Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcised dog
> And smote him, thus.

Othello's death is perfectly consistent with his life. From first to last, he is the judge.

THREE GREEK CRITICS[1]

G. M. A. GRUBE

PLATO banished the poets from his ideal Republic. This, and often little else, is remembered in every discussion of ancient criticism. Banishing the poets, however, is not Plato's only, nor indeed his chief contribution to the history of criticism, though it is a contribution of some importance. To understand his attitude to poetry and to literature we must keep in mind both the attitude of the Greeks in general to poetry and its place in Greek education.

Plato wrote four centuries or more after the unexplained miracle of the Homeric poems with which, for us, Greek literature begins. Homer's outlook is in many ways Greek, not least in the respect paid to poets and poetry by Homeric society. Achilles in his tent sings epic ballads to the accompaniment of the lyre like any rhapsode; King Antinous is as proud of his court poet as he is of his sailors. Hesiod claims for the poets parity with feudal lords, and that tradition was never lost. When, during the intervening centuries, the Greeks sought guidance in the art of life, as men must ever seek it, they received little such guidance from their Olympian gods, beyond a very few ethical imperatives such as respect for parents, hospitality, the sanctity of an oath. But if the gods of Homer were of little help, there was a good deal of inspiration to be got from the moral code of his heroes; and Homer, whose only aim was to delight, became in the fullest sense a moral and educational force in Greek life. We know that every Athenian gentleman was brought up on Homer; Homeric heroes were the heroes of every schoolboy long before Alexander the Great slept with Homer under his pillow. Education in classical Greece consisted largely of poetry, music, and physical training, and among the poets Homer was supreme. Indeed, he remained *the* poet for two thousand years. Many, even in the fifth century, regarded him also as *the* teacher above all others.

Now when poetry and music are such a vital force in society, such an essential part of the individual's life and outlook, they cannot be divorced from life, nor would anyone dream of so divorcing them. Art for art's sake cannot be pursued until poetry has withdrawn into the study and music to the studio. This is a view of art which no Greek critic would have conceived or understood until the days of Byzantium.

Our best witness to the fact that poetry and music were vital forces in fifth-century Athens is Aristophanes. His comedies were written to

[1]Presented at a meeting of the Colloquium in the Humanities, University of Toronto, October 24, 1951.

be performed before the whole people. They abound in literary allusions to, and parody and criticism, both moral and literary, of contemporary poets. *The Frogs,* performed in 405 B.C., presents the famous contest between Aeschylus and Euripides for the chair of Tragedy in Hades. Aristophanes does not disguise his moral prejudices but, quite apart from them, he draws a perennial contrast in style, music, and prosody between the two poets and their different conceptions of tragedy, a contrast which is only in part accounted for by their different dates. It is the first, perhaps the most vivid, and probably the most amusing, piece of literary criticism in existence. The point here, however, is that in the modern world Aristophanes' comedy, and a number of scenes in his others, could be performed with any hope of success only before an audience of graduate students in literature. It is also Aristophanes who explicitly states what is implied in the Greek attitude to poetry from the beginning: that the poets are the teachers of the people.

A rival group of teachers, however, arose in the second half of the fifth century. The development of democracy offered great prizes in power and prestige to the practised orator, and the Sophists arose in answer to the crying need for more education, particularly in the art of speaking. The Athenians were already trained to the appreciation of the beauty of language in the theatre; they were, indeed, peculiarly sensitive to it. They had, of course, applauded many orators in their assemblies; but now the Sophists suddenly made them realize that oratory—and prose, too—could be an art which might claim to stand by the side of poetry as another part of the art of language. Like Molière's M. Jourdain, they saw that they had been talking prose all their life, and that prose was an art. We can almost date this sudden realization at the first visit to Athens, in 427 B.C., of the Sicilian rhetorician Gorgias, the first theorist of the art of prose on the Greek continent. Like all pioneers, he exaggerated; his poetical vocabulary, his fantastic metaphors, his exaggerated use of balanced and antithetic clauses were much criticized by Aristotle and later critics. But his influence was immediate and immense. We can easily trace it from the tortured magnificence of Thucydides to the monotonous smoothness of Isocrates, the superb balance of Plato, and the nervous intensity of Demosthenes.

Gorgias and the other Sophists thus injected a new subject into the Greek curriculum; poetry and music were now followed by rhetoric. And the only aim of the teachers of rhetoric was to teach how to persuade, the only knowledge they found necessary was knowledge of the means of persuasion on the basis of the common opinions of men—

all other knowledge was, to them, if not impossible, at least unnecessary. Moral values were irrelevant. So this new force in education was, it seemed, as amoral as poetry, and with very much less excuse. The position of "teachers of men" had been fathered upon the poets. The old poets at least had not claimed it, but the Sophists *did* claim to be teachers and it was urgently necessary that someone should examine thoroughly what it was that in fact they taught.

The Sophists' claims were put into a more respectable Athenian dress by Isocrates who, fifteen years older than Plato, opened his school at Athens about 390—roughly ten years before the Academy—and taught the most renowned Athenian generals and politicians for half a century until he died (still writing) in 338 at the age of ninety-eight. He equated oratory, the power to speak well on great subjects, with higher education, a formula which was to dominate the Graeco-Roman world. It was really very simple: to speak well on important matters of state you have to be interested in them and must try to be well informed about them, though there is no real knowledge of them. By means of them you can develop your power of judgment and decision. Further, as you want to persuade your audience, and the character and reputation of the speaker is an important element of successful persuasion, you will want to be as good a man as possible. All very simple—and that is all Isocrates ever says. We could imagine, even if we did not know, what Plato thought of that as a method of education!

Poetry, music, and now rhetoric. It had not seemed enough to Socrates who had shown another way, through painful self-examination and the accumulation of knowledge (which he at least had thought to be possible), through philosophical inquiry into the meaning of ethical concepts. When Plato opened the Academy, it was as the heir of Socrates, as the apostle of the Socratic method of education. It was therefore entirely natural, indeed imperative, that he should examine the claims of the two rivals, poetry and oratory, from this point of view. For no man was ever more profoundly convinced of the tremendous appeal and power of poetry and music in the moulding of human character, and the power of oratory was there for all to see. Starting from the simple proposition that, in order to teach, you must know something, he proceeds to examine the extravagant claims to knowledge and wisdom which were currently made on behalf of the poets and the orators.

We all remember how, in Plato's *Apology*, Socrates, startled by the oracle who declared him the wisest man in Greece, set out to prove other men wiser than he; how he approached the poets and found they could not explain their own poems; how he concluded they had no

knowledge of what they wrote and must therefore be said to write their beautiful poems by inspiration, without knowledge.

The same subject is treated in the *Ion*. The rhapsode Ion claims to discuss and understand Homer better than any other man; but he confesses other poets do not interest him. As it is impossible to understand Homer apart from other poets, Socrates concludes that Ion too must be inspired, and this inspiration which passes from poet to rhapsode and from rhapsode to audience is compared to the power of attraction of a magnet. "The Muse herself makes men inspired, and through them others become possessed, a whole cluster of them depending from one another like iron rings suspended from a magnetic stone" (533e). We can see here what it is that Plato feared. *Enthusiasmos,* inspiration or possession, is a passive process in its Greek sense. The man who is possessed by a god is only a passive vehicle; he surrenders himself completely and uncritically. And it is this uncritical emotional surrender, this complete absence of any rational direction or control, which Plato considered dangerous. It was too much like intoxication by Dionysus and Aphrodite. Possession by a god was not necessarily a good thing, since the gods were not necessarily good.

Parallel to the *Ion* is the *Gorgias,* which examines in a similar way the claims of the rhetoricians and finds that rhetoric is no true art or craft (τέχνη) for it does not require knowledge nor does it, like a true art, aim at what is good. It is a counterfeit art. The popularity of the famed rhetorical teachers is no more a proof of genuine art than is the popularity of a pastry cook among a crowd of children who would certainly choose to follow him rather than a doctor (464d).

The attack on poetry in the *Republic* begins from a more traditional angle: the immoral stories about the gods. This leads straight to the principle of censorship—a principle which, in one way or another, every civilized state has always adopted, with the exception of Athens herself. Plato goes too far, but that often happens to a man who faces a problem for the first time. We may jeer at Plato, but the correct solution still eludes us.

Plato soon leads us back to his particular bugbear: uncritical emotional surrender to the appeal of poetry, and of drama in particular. The most complete surrender is in impersonation, and this is the meaning of *mimêsis* in the third book of the *Republic*. The audience is affected in the same way, if to a lesser extent; and so afraid is Plato of this emotional identification, without reason to guide it, that he forbids the imitation or impersonation of any evil deed or character on the

[2]Plato, *Republic* 392d–398a.

stage. Those poets who will not obey will be banished from the Republic, however pleasant or poetical their work.[2]

In the tenth book the word *mimêsis* is used in a more general sense: the poet can never directly represent or imitate the Platonic Forms; all he can do is to imitate or represent the particular phenomena of life. This is the famous Platonic theory of imitation. Plato does not claim it as his own but as a truism which everyone will accept, and it was so accepted, for we find it in Xenophon and Aristophanes[3] as well as Aristotle, and it is nowhere disputed.

We note that imitation applies to painting, music, sculpture, and architecture, in fact to all the arts. This obviously does not mean that a painter can only draw a man he has seen, or a dramatist portray only the scene or the characters he has himself witnessed. That would be utter nonsense, and Plato does not write nonsense (except on purpose). We should not be misled by his habit of vivid illustration[4] into believing him to mean that good painting is photography and drama best produced by a phonograph. He means, quite simply, that the artist must draw his material from life, and that poetry and art generally (including music) must be like life. As such, the theory was accepted throughout antiquity and is very widely accepted still. And if he does not allow the artist to express the Ideas directly, it may have been due to his perception of the fact that poetry must be individualized to make its appeal to our emotions, that the poetry or tragedy of pure ideas is no poetry at all.

Because he is so afraid that we become like that with which we identify ourselves emotionally, he carries on his attack with zest. The poet (mainly the dramatist) appeals to emotion *only*, therefore to the lowest part of the soul; he is thrice removed from reality; he confines himself to appearances. Plato throws out one challenge after another with the hope, as he says himself, that some defence may be forthcoming.[5]

Yet he knew better than any man that there is no life without emotion. He may have realized that his attacks on uncontrolled emotional surrender might be, perhaps had been, misunderstood. And so he wrote

[3]Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.10; Aristophanes, *Thesmaphoriazusae* 156. See also the Homeric hymn to Apollo 163. For Aristotle see below. For the theory of imitation as a truism, see Plato, *Laws* 668b-c.

[4]The most famous is the illustration of the bed, the Form of which is said to be made by "the god," the actual bed by the carpenter, and the imitation of the actual bed by the painter (*Republic* 597b–598b). If taken literally, this image creates as much difficulty in Plato's theology as in his theory of art.

[5]*Ibid.*, 607d.

the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus,* together the most profound, as well as the most poetical, vindication of human passion ever written. But passion must be directed towards truth and beauty (to Plato they are the same); and that, to him, means it must be governed by reason. For this passion Plato uses the strong term μανία, madness; it is possessed by the lover of truth as well as the lover of beauty. The *Phaedrus* myth contains the following:

> Madness that comes from a god is better than the moderation that comes from men. (244c)
>
> Whoever comes to the gates of poetry without the madness of the Muses, and believes that technical skill will make him an adequate poet, is not a complete man. The poetry of such a sensible man will vanish before that of those that are mad. (245b)

There is no contradiction here with the *Republic,* though admittedly there is a change of emphasis. Ecstasy is essential, but ecstasy must come from the gods, which is a mythical way of saying it must be directed towards the good.[6] Mere undirected emotionalism remains an enemy.

The second part of the *Phaedrus* establishes certain critical principles, and deliberately sets out to discover how to write beautifully, whether in prose or verse (258d; cf. 259e). I can only mention without comment the main points which Plato makes: (1) The difference between content and structure should be clearly observed. (2) The writer should know his subject, if only to deceive successfully. (3) The subject should be defined. (4) Any logos should have structure, whose parts fit together as in a living organism. (5) All parts should be related to the whole, so that the writer is able to analyse a whole logically. (6) Technique is only a prerequisite to art; it is not art.

Plato dwells on the last point. The man who thinks he is a musician because he knows his notes, and the man who knows the effect of various drugs without knowing when to apply them, are no different from the man who can make long or short speeches that arouse pity and fear and, without knowing when to make such speeches, thinks himself a teacher of tragedy. Sophocles and Euripides would laugh at him, for they know pity and fear are but the elements of tragedy, which consists of these elements fitted together into a whole.[7]

[6]In Plato's own myths the gods are good, but they are not quite the same as the quarreling gods of popular legend, though they sometimes bear the same names. Hence Plato treats inspiration from the gods of his myths seriously, while he can be ironical, as in the *Ion* and the *Apology,* about divine inspiration in the popular sense.

[7]Plato, *Phaedrus* 259–69.

Socrates, in the *Phaedrus,* also foreshadows several common formulae of the rhetorical schools, as when he says that art requires natural ability, training, and knowledge. For once, he makes a real effort to limit the knowledge needed by the writer or orator. He restricts this knowledge to the functions and powers of the human soul, to what form of words or arguments are likely to appeal in each case, and to the meaning and intent of the arguments themselves. This is largely the method that Aristotle follows in the *Rhetoric.*

Plato discusses poetry and music once more in the *Laws* (653–70). He was then an old man, but he was as convinced as ever that these arts have a great part to play in education and in life, particularly in the training of the emotions of the young and, as he now adds, in the re-creation of emotional balance and control throughout life.

Particularly illuminating is his account of the origin of poetry and music. The root of music is the natural desire for movement. The random movements of the infant are gradually subjected to orderly control because of our specifically human capacity, the sense of rhythm, and this gradual imposition of order and rhythm culminates in the choral dance. So with utterance. Wild and random at first, it, too, is gradually ordered by our human sense of harmony and rhythm so that the culmination of human capacity in this province is poetry. Both music and poetry are thus rooted in the primary instincts of human life itself. We all speak and move; we are all, to some extent, poets and musicians. For this reason the appeal of both poetry and music is universal.

Plato in the *Laws* finds three criteria of good art. One is still the moral criterion. The second is pleasure, and although he continues to insist that it must be the pleasure of the educated, and that art must not be judged by mere box office appeal, yet he also insists that the pleasure must be there. The third criterion is artistic excellence, which is now included for the first time. The product of art must be a "correct" imitation of life, with characterization that is right and consistent. We also note that the poet need not understand the moral value of his work, but he must still, of course, obey the statesman. The judge of any work must take all these criteria into account and he must also understand the aim of the poet (*τί βούλεται*).

Plato says very little about comedy, but there is an interesting passage of the *Philebus* (48a) where he suggests that the pleasure of comedy, like that of tragedy, is mixed with *φθόνος* or envy, a painful emotion, and that the proper butt of comedy is self-ignorance, be it of one's possessions, one's appearances, or one's character: "Pain is mixed

with pleasure in dirges, tragedies and comedies, not only in plays but in the whole tragedy and comedy of life" (50b).

When we turn to Aristotle, we must realize at once that his analytic method enables him to deal with one subject at a time and to stay within the limits of that subject. The *Poetics* tries to find the artistic criteria of good poetry; the *Rhetoric* deals with the art of prose. The moral effect of poetry is not dealt with in either work. But where that subject is discussed, in the seventh and eighth books of the *Politics,* Aristotle's point of view is the same as Plato's.[8] The principle of censorship is wholeheartedly accepted, with an important difference in its application.

Like Plato, Aristotle recognizes the educational and the recreational function of *mousikê* (poetry and music). He makes an interesting distinction between recreation and leisure, which is the time which remains *after* work *and* recreation. In the employment of that leisure *mousikê* also has a part to play which we may term cultural, if we remember that true leisure is a condition attained only by the fully educated, and then only intermittently. It is an end in itself, far above the life of average men, and about this cultural or leisure use of the arts Aristotle says little, though he insists on its importance.

It is in connection with the recreational effects of *mousikê* that he mentions its cathartic function. The effects of orgiastic music in calming over-excited people had been mentioned by Plato, and Aristotle develops the idea and explains the cleansing away of such excessive emotions by these means. Imitations (even without music) are apt to rouse the emotions and then cleanse them away—and this is especially true of the arts that appeal to the ear. In order therefore to cleanse away pity and fear from people who are given to such emotions, he allows the kind of performance that will do this. Those who benefit are the "more vulgar parts of the audience, mechanics and general labourers . . . whose souls are perverted from their natural state" and who therefore require this over-emotional *mousikê* to refresh them and bring them back to a more balanced state. The better people in the audience, the "free" men, do not require this sort of purgation. It is then only with a certain kind of spectator in view that purgative *mousikê* is allowed.

There is no other explanation of catharsis, but it is clear that the term is used in its medical sense of purgation, cleansing away. Catharsis is intended only for the vulgar; it has nothing to do with the life of leisure. That state is only attained by those who need no catharsis.

[8]Aristotle, *Politics* 7.17.5 (1336 a 30) and 8.5–7 (1339 a–1342 b).

Thus forewarned let us turn to the definition of tragedy in the *Poetics*: "Tragedy is an imitation of a morally good action, complete and of a certain magnitude, in language made pleasing by every form of ornament found in its various parts; through actors and not through narrative, by pity and fear it achieves the purgation of such emotions" (1449 b 24–8). Tragedy, indeed all art, is to Aristotle, as to Plato, imitation. Both use the words in exactly the same sense, though Aristotle clarifies the meaning of the term by specifically stating that tragedy imitates characters and actions which are better than life, comedy those that are worse, and also by his defence of "untruth" in poetry where he says that the poet may imitate things as they are, as they were, as they ought to be, or as men think they are. Each of these aims can be used as a defence against the charge of untruth; most of them can be found in Plato in various contexts, but by thus bringing them together, Aristotle greatly clarifies the meaning of *mimêsis*.[9]

"A morally good action" is the only correct translation of πράξις σπουδαία. True, many attempts have been made to empty the definition of any moral content and translate the word σπουδαῖος as "serious" or the like. A comparison with the definition of comedy as imitation of an action "morally inferior," and the persistent moral contrast between comedy and tragedy (1448 a 2) as well as the use of σπουδαῖος elsewhere in Aristotle, leave no possible doubt as to the meaning.[10]

The rest of the definition is clear till we come once more to catharsis. With the passages from the *Politics* before us, there is no reason for importing into this context any Orphic "purification." Aristotle is the most un-Orphic of men; he clearly means that we get rid of pity and fear, because both fear and pity (which is a kind of fear) are bad and to be avoided, as we are told in the *Rhetoric*.[11] The real problem is not the meaning of catharsis, but whether here also (as in the *Politics*) this effect is intended only for vulgar persons who cannot control their

[9]For other views of *mimêsis* see S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* (London, 1911), 121–61.

[10]*Ibid.*, 228–39. The sense of σπουδαῖος is clearly moral in *Poetics* 1448 a 2 and wherever (as in 1449 a 31) a contrast with comedy is made; see also 1449 b 10. Bywater, however, still translates it as "serious" in his edition, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry* (Oxford, 1909).

[11]Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2. cc. 5, 8. Catharsis is now generally recognized to be mainly a medical metaphor. For a discussion of earlier theories see Bywater's notes to *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, 152–61, and Gudeman's notes in *Aristoteles* Περὶ Ποιητικῆς (Berlin and Leipzig, 1934), 167–73. An interesting study of the close relationship between catharsis and Aristotle's physiological theories will be found in Jeanne Croissant's "Aristote et les Mystères," in *Bibliothèque de philosophies et de lettres* (Liège, 1932), especially pp. 33–48 and 63–111.

emotions, the wise man remaining quite unaffected. I am afraid that Aristotle does mean precisely that. He does not say so, because the question does not arise here and because, to him, the answer is obvious. We should also remember that the emphasis on pity and fear was a commonplace from the time of Gorgias.

The definition of tragedy shows the strength and weakness of Aristotle's method. As a definition it is woefully inadequate and we should face the fact that Aristotle shows no trace anywhere of emotional reaction to poetry. The search for truth is to him so much more important than any art that he cannot avoid a superior attitude to both arts of poetry and prose. In the *Politics* (5.8.20), he complains that cities waste their money "on such useless liturgies as equipping a chorus, torch-light processions and the like." In the *Rhetoric* (3.1.5–6) he says one must pay attention to style (and delivery) in oratory because of the inferior audiences one has to deal with, "but no one teaches geometry that way!" We can hardly expect an adequate definition of tragedy from a man whose emotions are not stirred.

But Aristotle's genius for analysis is unique, and he applies it to poetry and oratory with his usual painstaking care and patience. The result is some very illuminating suggestions in both the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*. The theory of catharsis, for example, though ignored in antiquity, is an effective answer to Plato's "we become like what we imitate," even if restricted to the recreation of "mechanics and general labourers." Today, we may be more willing to give it a wider application.

In the same way Aristotle refines Plato's wholesale prohibition of evil on the stage. He sees that one must judge any evil act or speech in relation to the whole character in the play, and to the play as a whole, though he still insists that the aim and purpose of the play must be morally good.

One of his happiest suggestions concerns the tragic hero. Neither the saint nor the villain is properly tragic; his tragic hero is "a man not outstanding in virtue or righteousness, nor one whose ill-fortune is due to vice or depravity—but to some defect [ἁμαρτία]." The word ἁμαρτία does not mean a mere error of judgment, it means a moral defect which yet does not make a man vicious. Aristotle himself gives the appropriate example of Achilles, whose violent temper is certainly a moral defect, but who remains a great hero in spite of it. Thus the tragic hero will be sufficiently "like ourselves" to evoke our pity. Yet he can still be "better than life" (as tragedy should be)—just as a painter can preserve the likeness to his model and yet make him more beautiful than life. Much the same is true of the comic hero. He too

has a ἁμάρτημα, but here the picture as a whole is rather inferior to the model, which is life.[12]

I will pass over the many other points of interest in the *Poetics*. On most of them there is no dispute about Aristotle's meaning. But I want to say something of the *Rhetoric*, a book of far greater immediate influence. Aristotle himself refers us to it for the art of expressing thought in prose or verse. All men share in this art to some extent, inevitably, every day of their lives.

The first book deals with human goods, the subject-matter of all rhetoric; the second is full of shrewd analyses of human emotions, the third deals with requirements of style. In this Aristotle is largely following the method outlined in Plato's *Phaedrus*, and incidentally answering the question raised by Plato as to what knowledge the orator needs to possess. He gives the same answer as in other fields. His *Politics* show that one can be an effective politician without sharing the philosopher's knowledge of reality. His *Ethics* show how one can be a good and happy man (if not the best type of man or the happiest) without being a philosopher. So the *Rhetoric*, in the first two books, shows the limited knowledge of human goods and human psychology that are needed to make one a good speaker (or writer). Further, it puts a philosophical base under the legitimate claims of a school such as that of Isocrates.

Many are the formulae, later to become commonplaces, which appear here for the first time: the clearly realized difference between the diction of poetry and prose; the division of rhetoric into forensic, political or deliberative, and epideictic (which last, to the annoyance of Isocrates, he considered the least important); the distinction between content and style, and the division of the latter into diction and composition or sentence-structure. Then there is the further division of sentence-structure into the running or strung-along style and the periodic style where thought and sentence-structure correspond and each sentence has a definite form. There are the divisions of a speech, of which Aristotle will only allow four: prologue or introduction, narrative, proof, and epilogue (he really prefers statement and proof only) each with its definite function.

Prose must be rhythmic but not metrical—a statement repeated in every text-book for centuries, though the Romans preferred a heavier metre than Aristotle's favourite paeonic to begin or end a sentence.

[12] *Poetics* 1453 a and 1454 b 10–14, reading, with Gudeman: παραδεῖγμα τῆς σκληρότητος καὶ ἀγαθόν. For the view that ἁμαρτία is a mere error of judgment see Bywater, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, notes on 1453 a 10; and, more doubtfully, Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 37 ff.

Types of argument, figures of thought and speech, qualities and defects of diction and style are analysed with a clarity and a wealth of example from poetry and prose which, together with a mass of extraordinarily shrewd comments on human nature and events, make the whole work immeasurably superior to the mass of text-books on rhetoric which were written then and continued to be written for fifteen hundred years.

Aristotle, typically, will only recognize one virtue of style (diction and composition) and that is lucidity. The use of everyday language makes for clarity but, because men like what is strange and new, we must also introduce unusual words and ornamentation, and strike a mean between the two so as to make our spoken or written words fitting (πρέπον, the Latin *decorum*) or suitable to the occasion, the audience, and the author. The chief ornament in prose is metaphor, with which he deals at length. He had already told us in the *Poetics* (1459 a 6) that this is the one thing that cannot be learned from anyone else, for it depends upon the author's or speaker's capacity to see likenesses in things. Aristotle's treatment of metaphor alone well repays study. He is, like every Greek critic, very much aware of the importance of semantics, of whether, as he puts it, you call Orestes his father's avenger or his mother's murderer. The point is also well illustrated by the story of how Simonides, when asked to write an ode to celebrate victory in a mule-race, indignantly refused to write an ode on half-asses. When the fee was increased, however, he wrote a poem beginning: "Daughters of storm-footed steeds." But, comments Aristotle, they were asses' daughters just the same.[13] The discussion of style ends with an attempt to account for particularly happy and pleasing sayings. Aristotle connects their success with man's delight in learning something new, a delight also caused by a good metaphor, a particularly apt word, a clever antithesis or argument. All these gain in their effect from brevity, as did Pericles' famous remark, after heavy loss of Athenian youth in battle, that the year had lost its spring, or Stesichorus' threat to the Dorians: "Your grasshoppers will sing from the ground." The *Rhetoric* is one of the most fascinating works of Aristotle, and a good deal of its fascination remains in translation. For mere technique, Aristotle has the same contempt as Plato, but, as always, he has a good deal more patience.

For three centuries after Aristotle we have nothing but scattered fragments—a fertile field for doctoral dissertations, most of which make dismal reading because their only purpose is to prove that this formula belongs to that author or that formula to this, whereas in fact the

[13]Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.2.14.

formula is neither original nor important. The result is frequently of interest only to writers of rival dissertations. At any rate this is not the place to gather the odd pearl of interest from a sea of learned dispute. It is not until the first century B.C. in Rome that we again have complete works of criticism, such as Cicero's masterly if diffuse treatises on the education of the orator, the chief purpose of which is to put him back on the royal road of Aristotelian common sense. Horace's *Art of Poetry* largely applies the same principles to poetry again. Its influence was tremendous when the Greek works were lost, and the author's supreme gift for the happy turn of phrase successfully hides his utter lack of originality. Originality still belongs to the Greeks, to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a contemporary of Horace, and to Demetrius "On Style" more even than to the magnificent text-book of Quintilian, the greatest professor of antiquity.

By far the most original work of criticism after the time of Aristotle, however, is the little book Περὶ ὕψους, usually translated *On the Sublime*. Traditionally ascribed to Cassius Longinus in the third century A.D., it is today generally dated in the first century. The arguments are not compelling for either date. We really know nothing of either date or author.[14]

The book is an attempt to answer the question: What makes really great writing? or, more literally, How do writers reach the greatest heights? "Sublime" is not a bad translation, in its general sense, provided we remember that the author is not discussing grandeur of diction or composition, though the word ὕψος was so used by others. He has a number of synonyms to indicate the sublime (ὑψηλά, μεγέθη, ὑπερφυᾶ, etc.). Indeed, his dislike of technical terms is by no means the only Platonic influence.

Longinus was obviously familiar with Greek literature. He has a personal approach to his authors and his criticism has freshness and individuality even when he deals with oft-quoted passages. He knows the terminology and the formulae of the schools, but uses them for his own purposes.

He is much too wise to define his intangible subject, but describes its effect, its various aspects and sources. Great or sublime passages consist of supremely excellent language; they aim not to persuade but to take the reader right out of himself (ἔκστασις). Other qualities of style emerge from a whole work, but the sublime is sudden, it sweeps

[14]See Rhys Roberts' edition, *Longinus on the Sublime* (Cambridge, 1899). Other translations more easily available are those by A. O. Pritchard, *Longinus on the Sublime* (Oxford, 1906 and 1930); and by Hamilton Fyfe in the Loeb Classical Library.

everything before it like a thunderbolt, its full power is realized in a flash (c. 1). It not only lifts us out of ourselves but fills us with joy and pride as if we ourselves had created it. We can return to it again and again, it is hard to forget, and it delights all men always (c. 7).

Longinus recognizes five sources of sublimity, all of which are usually found together. The first he considers the most important; it is mental vigour, nobility of mind, the capacity to grasp great conceptions. In thus emphasizing mental power Longinus strikes a note we have not heard since Plato, especially in the great passage where he says that Nature has not made man ignoble, but has put into the human soul an invincible love of things great and divine so that the whole world is not enough to encompass the mind of man. We admire not little streams but the Nile, the Danube, and the Rhine (c. 35). Great writing is, as he puts it, "the echo of a noble mind,"[15] and a noble conception can be expressed even without words. When Ajax is addressed by Odysseus in the underworld, he merely strides away (c. 9). Longinus also quotes the prayer of Ajax on behalf of the defeated Greeks: "Zeus, clear away the mist that we may die in daylight"; and the first words of "the lawgiver of the Jews, no ordinary man: God said: let there be light, and there was light; let there be Earth, and there was Earth."

An essential quality of a great mind is the ability to select the vital details in his picture and to weld these into a whole. In this connection, and as if to correct the impression that mere grandeur appeals to him, he gives as illustration the famous ode of Sappho (preserved for us here only) which begins:

> Like an immortal is to me
> The man who sits and looks on thee. . . .

Comparisons of storm scenes from Homer, Aristeas, and Aratus show in detail why *the* poet is much the greatest (c. 10) and possesses a power of imagination which sees the picture and makes you see it. Poetic imagination aims to amaze and enthral—prose must be content with vividness (c. 15).

The second source of the sublime is "strong and inspired emotion." This is unfortunately reserved for a separate discussion which we do not possess. "Nothing," Longinus says, "attains greatness more than noble passion in the right place, as it breathes into the words mad exaltation and divine possession." We miss the full discussion, especially in view of two curious admissions: that some passages are sublime without emotion (a passage of the giants piling Pelion on Ossa is

[15] *Longinus on the Sublime*, c. 9: μεγαλοφροσυνης ἀπήχημα.

quoted in illustration), and that certain emotions are foreign to sublimity: pity, fear, and grief (c. 8).

The third source of the sublime is the proper use of figures. This is a regular theme of the rhetoricians, usually treated with great care and dulness. Longinus, however, finds a method worthy of an intelligent teacher and critic. He first discusses, fully and brilliantly, one example, a famous sentence of Demosthenes.[16] He then deals with the relation between the figures and ὕψος: without its brilliance and passion they are lifeless and suspect, but they can and do contribute to the sublimity of a great passage when they become vehicles of light. He follows this with a number of examples of different figures, and concludes that "they all help to make our speech more passionate and more stirring, and passion is as important to the sublime as characterization is to pleasant writing" (c. 29). There is obviously no room for characterization in the sudden flash of greatness.

Of Longinus' treatment of noble diction much is lost. All speakers and writers make such diction their chief aim, because "it adds to their work greatness and beauty, mellowness, weight, strength, power; it makes words bloom with a shining brightness, as do the most beautiful statues; it endows the subject-matter with a soul that speaks . . . for beautiful words are in truth the mind's peculiar light . . ." (c. 30). The words must, of course, suit the subject, and Longinus very properly allows vulgarisms in the right place (c. 31). He refuses to follow Aristotle and Theophrastus in limiting metaphors to two or three in one passage, and rather doubtfully accepts Aristotle's jejune advice that a bold metaphor is softened by a qualifying phrase, for example, "as if," or "if I may put it thus." The real test, to Longinus, is whether the passion of the passage can make the metaphors convincing (c. 32).

The fifth and last source of the sublime, in part the result of all the rest, is "dignified and spirited composition," i.e. sentence-structure. Here the discussion is more general and concentrates on two main points: (1) proper rhythm in poetry and prose, in contrast to music, is allied with meaning and thus has a powerful effect on the soul (he deprecates, like all the critics, both metrical prose and broken, hurried rhythms); and (2) the anatomy of the sentence must be such that each part fits into the whole like the part of a living organism. He quotes (following Aristotle) Euripides as a poet whose greatness is due to his talent in composition rather than to poetic genius (c. 40).

Longinus sees the dangers of trying to reach the sublime, and he lists

[16] *Ibid.*, c. 16. This sentence is the famous Marathon oath in Demosthenes' speech *On the Crown* 208. Chapters 16–32 discuss figures, and there are two substantial lacunae.

four vices to which the attempt may lead (cc. 3–4): turgidity, puerility ("the way of thinking common in the schools which ends in frigidity through overelaboration"), misplaced or unrestrained passion (*parenthyrsis*), and frigidity (often due to strange conceits, ξέναι νοήσεις). Other faults, such as pettiness of language, are added as he goes along. Faults as well as virtues are illustrated from the greatest authors. He does not spare anyone, not even Homer. Indeed, one of his most striking passages is where he argues (c. 33) that greatness which inevitably has faults (for genius is careless) is always to be preferred to faultless mediocrity, for greatness is not won by avoiding risks. Who would not prefer, he asks, to be Homer rather than Apollonius, Pindar than Bacchylides, Sophocles than Ion? Yet all these lesser men were practically faultless. And in the same vein he has an elaborate comparison of Hypereides, who has nearly all the virtues, and Demosthenes (cc. 34–5) who has greatness.

Critical estimates and phrases which one longs to quote abound throughout the work. I will, in conclusion, quote but one or two. There is the famous passage (cc. 9–12) which declares the *Odyssey* to be the work of Homer's old age because "old men love to tell stories," because it is less dramatic and presupposes the *Iliad*:

> Hence in the Odyssey one may compare Homer to the setting sun: the greatness remains, the vehemence has gone. . . .
>
> . . . like an ocean that has withdrawn within itself. . . .
>
> . . . the stories of the Odyssey are like the dreams of Zeus. . . .

In the comparison of Cicero and Demosthenes (c. 34) we have the following:

> The sublimity of Demosthenes is abrupt for the most part, that of Cicero is like a flood. Our man is violent, swift, strong and intense; he may be compared to a bolt of lightning which burns and ravages. Cicero is like a spreading conflagration which rolls and ranges far and wide. . . .

Each of the three critics we have discussed approaches literature from a different angle. Plato is mainly concerned with the function of literature in society and with the mind of the poet. To Plato the poet must, ultimately, be a philosopher; he must understand life before he can write about it, and once he has that philosophic knowledge he cannot, or so Plato thought, even try to escape his responsibility to society. Aristotle, on the other hand, applies his superb powers of analysis to the products of literature objectively, and tries to discover what it is that makes them successful or otherwise. In his hands this approach is essential and enlightening; but it was to dominate sub-

sequent Greek criticism, which during the next two thousand years and in the hands of smaller men, lost itself in a maze of over-subtle rhetorical formalizing. Longinus injects a new element by his personal approach when he tries to communicate to others the effect which great literature has on himself. And, because this approach alone does not satisfy him, he combines it with Plato's interest in the personality of the poet as well as with Aristotle's analytic and objective approach. Longinus is thus undoubtedly the greatest literary critic of antiquity.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS: A COMEDY OF HUMOURS

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FACED with the contradictory reactions to *Gulliver's Travels,* varying from indignation to laughter, we may as well admit that it is impossible to reach critical agreement as to the appropriate emotional response to the book. No amount of critical argument is likely to convince a shocked reader that he really should like *Gulliver's Travels.* But we can agree—or see more clearly where we disagree—about the structure of the book. I shall, then, concern myself with this element, particularly with the function of Gulliver in the structure, rather than with either the proper emotional response or the other concerns of most criticism of *Gulliver's Travels*: Swift's intention, his personality, and the historical events of his period.[1]

Gulliver's function can, I think, be best understood if we realize that he is like Swift's other characters and that they are all conventional figures, specifically "humourists," having certain basic traits which are similar to those of the "true humourist" described in Corbyn Morris's *Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule* (London, 1744). The effectiveness of Swift's use of the convention, however, depends not upon the reader's familiarity with the literary practice of a particular period but upon Swift's skill in making the characteristics of the humourist clear to a reader—of his or a later period. Morris's description of the humourist merely tells us what to look for in Swift's characters and enables us to see in general terms how the humourists operate in Swift's works.

Morris's humourist resembles Jonson's in being possessed of a particular bias, but his specific characteristics differ radically from those of Jonson's over-simplified, unnatural, and contemptible characters. Where Jonson's characters are personifications of vices and follies, Morris's detest vices and follies, and their actions are not unnatural, but credible eccentricities and aberrations from common sense. Un-

[1]Several modern critics minimize the importance of biography and history and look closely at the structure of *Gulliver's Travels*; see J. F. Ross, "The Final Comedy of Lemuel Gulliver," in *Studies in the Comic,* University of California Publications in English, VIII, no. 2 (Berkeley, 1941), 175–96; Edward Stone, "Swift and the Horses: Misanthropy or Comedy?" *Modern Language Quarterly,* X, 1949, 367–76; Arthur E. Case, "The Significance of *Gulliver's Travels,*" in *Four Essays on Gulliver's Travels* (Princeton University Press, 1945); Samuel Kliger, "The Unity of *Gulliver's Travels,*" *MLQ,* VI, 1945, 401–15; and particularly Ricardo Quintana, "Situational Satire: A Commentary on the Method of Swift," *University of Toronto Quarterly,* XVII, 1948, 130–36, for an excellent statement of the case for close structural analysis of Swift's works.

aware of his eccentricity, Morris's humourist is dogmatic about his opinions. Morris speaks of the "peremptory Manner in which he delivers his Opinion, and conducts himself upon every Occasion, without any Deference to others." Yet in spite of his oddity and his dogmatism, he is essentially admirable. "It is a palpable Absurdity," says Morris, "to suppose a Person an Humourist, without excellent Sense and Abilities." He is admirable for his concern with public welfare; he is "the Guardian of Freedom and Scourge of such as do wrong," a "Lover of Reason and Liberty." He is admirable for his sincerity; he gives his opinion "unbias'd by Fear or Regard, and then leaves it to the Persons concern'd to determine for themselves."

Now, most of the characters to whom Swift adapts his works have the essential characteristics of Morris's public-spirited, opinionated, but frank eccentric. Except for the narrator of *A Tale of a Tub,* who is a Jonsonian figure, a personification of folly, Swift's characters have believable humours, not the violent and vicious qualities of Jonsonian characters. The Examiner, for example, maintains that he is impartial in his judgment of Whigs and Tories; but everything he says proves that he has a common enough humour, blind loyalty to his party; he portrays all Whigs as villains and all Tories as saints. He and the other characters show the humourist's interest in the public by giving warning to the nation; the commentator in *A Project for the Advancement of Religion,* for example, warns against abuses which, if not remedied, will "end in the subversion of a commonwealth." They are all opinionated, many of them "projectors," and they announce their inflexible opinions as absolute truth. In their way they all answer to Morris's description of the humourist as "constitutionally, and also from Reflection, a man of Sincerity." Besides openly revealing their prejudices, they gratuitously offer us their own opinions and interpretations. Thus, Gulliver gives us the full benefit of his private conclusions about human nature as revealed in the Yahoos. Similarly, the projector of *A Modest Proposal* tells us exactly why he thinks his scheme is better than others aimed at the salvation of Ireland.

I have perhaps said enough to make it seem probable that Swift's characters conform to the pattern of the true humourist, and that they are being used to produce some common effect. They obviously lend themselves to Horatian ridicule or humour, which Swift and his contemporaries preferred to Juvenalian direct attack; Swift described the former as "that kind of satire, which is most useful, and gives the least offence, which instead of lashing, laughs men out of their follies and vices."[2]

[2]*Intelligencer,* No. 3 in *Prose Works,* ed. T. Scott (Bohn ed.), IX, 317.

The eccentric characteristics of the humourist, his dogmatism, his digressive candour, make him a poor agent for straightforward invective. Since such characteristics give the reader a feeling of superiority, he is not likely to take the humourist's opinions very seriously. Although the humourist, in his eagerness to scourge those who do wrong, lashes vices and follies, the reader can laugh at them—because the humourist's foible has made him exaggerated and because he has dogmatically found pure vice where a reader can see a mixture of vice and virtue. The humourists are thus a means of producing an indirect, ironic effect. The writer does not state his private conclusions but allows the reader to come to his own, guided by his own common sense. He sees that the humourist's foible, his deviation from common sense, leads him into exaggeration and hyperbole; and he can use his own opinions, learned from experience, to correct the humourist's distortions.

The indirect method can be considered successful, then, only if the reader sees that the humourist's meaning is not to be taken literally. Now it is possible to imagine an Irish farmer naïve enough (or desperate or cruel enough) to see in *A Modest Proposal* a solution for his economic difficulties and to try to market his excess children as so much meat. But such a reaction hardly seems likely; Swift has made the fictitious projector's humour—his attitude that man is merely an animal—apparent and outrageous enough so that most readers can see that he and his proposal lack common sense. At least in relation to *A Modest Proposal* Swift was probably right in assuming that even the common reader could perceive the exaggeration involved in the use of a humourist. "A taste for humour," he wrote, "is in some manner fixed to the very nature of man, and generally obvious to the vulgar, except upon subjects too refined, and superior to their understandings."[3]

The exaggeration in Swift's other works—including the last voyage of *Gulliver's Travels*—should, like that in *A Modest Proposal,* be clear to a reader who is aware of the nature of the humourist characters. The ones whom Swift uses in his major works (*A Tale of a Tub* excepted), relatively unlearned individuals who have no special knowledge and who have a pronounced bias, make their absurdity obvious to the reader and enable him to use his common sense in modifying the humourists' conclusions. If we pay careful attention to Swift's method, these conclusions cannot be taken as Swift's; and Swift's works are constructed not to arouse indignation but to have the effect indicated by his statement that humour is a point "which whoever can rightly touch, will never fail of pleasing a great majority."[4]

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]*Ibid.*, 316.

II

Gulliver is, then, basically a naïve, dogmatic humourist who is much concerned with public welfare. Yet the *Travels* is not a simple work, directed at the reform of eighteenth-century society in accordance with Gulliver's dogmatic and eccentric principles, but a complex comment on the essential nature of man and society. The complexity results from the interaction between Gulliver and the inhabitants of the four worlds into which he is placed, worlds which, though they resemble the world of the eighteenth century, are obviously imaginary and timeless lands which throw into different perspectives not merely the eighteenth-century scene but the relatively permanent moral nature of civilized man. For, from a human point of view, the Lilliputians, Brobdingnagians, Laputians, and Houyhnhnms all are characterized by the moral quality of pride; they show a "high or overweening opinion of their own qualities, attainments, or estate, which gives rise to a feeling or attitude of superiority over and contempt for others," to quote a definition of pride in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Swift emphasizes the distinctive kinds of pride by making the inhabitants of the lands portray various characters. Like Gulliver, they are dogmatic, opinionated, and almost entirely unaware of their own idiosyncrasies. The reader with a normal human point of view observes that the Lilliputians are obsessed with size as a determinant of rank and merit, which Swift comments on by making them six inches high and by expressing their distinctions in rank in terms of Gulliver's thumbnail; they therefore illustrate vividly pride in social distinctions and the absurdity of that pride. The Brobdingnagians have, by comparison with Gulliver, an exaggerated sense of their own strength, symbolized in their seventy-two feet of height; they illustrate pride in physical accomplishment. The Laputians' humour consists in an exclusive concern with systems and projects, symbolized by their eyes, one of which is turned inward and the other towards the zenith; they illustrate intellectual pride. The Houyhnhnms' nature, from a human point of view, runs "all one way" because of their intuitive reason and consequent innate virtue, which Swift symbolizes by making them an agrarian race of horses without any of the benefits or vices of civilization; they illustrate moral pride. Their humour is underscored by the presence of the Yahoos who illustrate shockingly the complete absence of the Houyhnhnm reason and virtue; human only in appearance, completely vicious, they represent in effect the negation of all the aspects of human pride revealed in the four lands, indeed the negation of all that is characteristically human.

The predominant traits in the four lands are humours, of course, only if the inhabitants are considered as human beings. Considered in their own terms, the Brobdingnagians and the Houyhnhnms are perfect citizens of their respective utopias; and even the Lilliputians and Laputians, though their societies have degenerated from an originally utopian state, are, with very few exceptions, unable to recognize the national characteristics which have caused their degeneration. If the traits of all four lands are to be seen as humours, then, they have to be looked at from a human point of view; and if the four imaginary societies are to serve the function of ridiculing human vices and follies, not of extolling virtues, they have to be seen from a point of view which makes not only the corrupt societies but also the utopias illustrate indirectly human imperfection.

These necessary functions are served by Gulliver and his humour. He provides the human point of view and, consciously or unconsciously, relates the imaginary societies to reality; but his humour prevents him from coming to common-sense conclusions, with the result that he draws a ridiculous picture of human vice and folly. His humour, labelled in his name with its associations of "gull" and "gullible," is his tendency to take on the colour of his surroundings; he lives gullibly. Born and raised in England, he starts out with the dogmatic opinions of an extremely patriotic Englishman. But on his voyages he also, temporarily, takes on the humours of the lands he visits. Having no "taste for humour" he does not see that the inhabitants have one extremely abnormal trait which should be taken into account. Consequently he tends to treat the inhabitants as normal humans, thus creating, in his description of Lilliput and Laputa, warped human societies composed of walking vices and follies. In the Brobdingnagian and Houyhnhnm utopias, either he or the inhabitants look at English society in the light of the prevailing bias; and because the Brobdingnagian humour demands greater physical accomplishment and the Houyhnhnm humour more moral power than human beings are capable of, the members of English society are, by comparison, distorted into vicious and contemptible creatures. And finally, Gulliver's humour leads him, unwillingly but dogmatically, to accept the Yahoos as human beings and to depict as a normal society one which is completely inhuman and uncivilized.

III

In the first voyage it is quite clear that Gulliver's humour is responsible for the attitudes expressed. The original effect of his humour, his patriotism, remains unchanged; he fails to see that the utopian insti-

tutions of the Lilliputians throw into relief the faults of the institutions of his own country, and he fails to draw the contrast, which is obvious to the reader. Nor does he see the Lilliputian humour and the degenerate institutions from a human point of view; instead, because of his bias, he takes on the ruling humour of the Lilliputians, identifies himself as a Lilliputian citizen, and treats the measurement of rank and worth by size not as ridiculous but as a characteristic of the normal, if corrupt, society of which he is a member. He ignores the difference in size between him and his hosts, protesting solemnly, for example, that in spite of rumours to the contrary his relations with the tiny wife of the Treasurer were purely friendly. As a concerned citizen of Lilliput he denounces the use of rope dancing to choose ministers as an "infamous practice." Because of his lack of a "taste for humour" he does not see the central reason for the corruption of Lilliputian society; and because he does not look at the Lilliputians from a normal human point of view he fails to see that all of their practices are, not infamous, but completely ridiculous.

This confusion between the infamous and the merely ridiculous, which is perpetuated by Gulliver's humour throughout the four voyages, and reaches its climax, as we shall see, at the end of the book, has been seen clearly by critics and readers of the first voyage. Partly because of the size of the Lilliputians, no one can miss the fact that Gulliver's assumption of the Lilliputian humour has led him to portray as a normal society one in which rank and party and national distinctions have been reduced to an absurdity—one in which the complex differences between people of various ranks, between parties, sects, and nations are reduced to a very small difference in size. It is obvious that the emperor is revered only because of his extra thumbnail of height, not because he has any special abilities or experience, that the Slamecksan and Tramecksan differ only by one-fourteenth of an inch in the heels, not by party programmes or principles, and that the great quarrel with Blefuscu is over a distinction in the size of the ends of eggs, not over any of the complex subjects of disagreement between nations. Consequently, although for a Lilliputian and for Gulliver the Lilliputian rulers are completely vicious, the reader can see the rulers as laughably ridiculous representations of normal human vices and follies resulting from pride in rank or party or nation, and critics agree that Swift is not indulging in invective in the first voyage.

On Gulliver's second voyage he again demonstrates his blind spot by taking over the humour of his hosts, their abnormal emphasis on physical achievement. Since size and strength are the measures of an individual's importance in the Brobdingnagian community (a stunted,

thirty-foot dwarf is useful only as a court jester), the Brobdingnagians can see Gulliver, and with him all human beings, only as a splacknuck or an embryo or an insect. And Gulliver adopts the Brobdingnagian standards, sees himself through Brobdingnagian eyes, and says, "I really began to imagine myself dwindled many degrees below my usual size."

Gulliver consequently describes his actions from a Brobdingnagian point of view, with the result that he himself serves to make ridiculous human follies resulting from physical pride. In the frustrating situation in which he finds himself, Gulliver's actions themselves are natural enough. He reacts normally when he tries to impress his enormous hosts (or salve his ego) by playing the spinet, running back and forth on the bench, trying to jump over a cow-dung, or when he proudly displays the carcass of the rat he has killed with his hanger. But because of Gulliver's assumption of the Brobdingnagian humour, he makes his actions fully as ridiculous to us as they would be to a Brobdingnagian, instead of making justifiable excuses or glossing over his inadequacy. Even when he suffers perhaps his greatest humiliation, when the maids of honour wound his sexual vanity by using him "without any sort of ceremony, like a creature of no sort of consequence," he describes their treatment of him in so much detail and in such terms that he seems pitifully inhuman.

He ignores the important fact that the maids of honour, the cows, the spinet, the wasps, the rat, have 1728 times the bulk of their English counterparts. He gives the enormous animals the names of the English animals and calls the enormous maids of honour simply maids of honour, not realizing that if he had named them according to size rather than shape—if he had called the "rat" a mastiff and the maids of honour giantesses—he would have come off much better in the reader's eyes. If the reader looks at Gulliver's actions from a normal point of view he can see that Gulliver really shows courage and ingenuity in killing the mastiff-sized rat—and that, considering the size of the spinet and the cows, Gulliver performs, or attempts, no mean feats. The reader can see that although Gulliver feels his sexual vanity has been destroyed by the one maid's treatment of him, his virility has not really been fairly called in question.

Gulliver reveals his pride, to be sure, in trying to impress the giants, but it is a normal and harmless pride, made ridiculous because Gulliver is as warped as the giants on the subject of size and strength and because, with a humourist's frankness, he exposes his newly formed humour. His descriptions of his actions so exaggerate normal follies

resulting from pride in physical accomplishment and importance that they do not constitute an attack on human dignity but serve to make such pride merely ridiculous. As in the first voyage—and all of the voyages, including the fourth—it is Gulliver, not Swift, who mistakes the patently ridiculous for the actual.

In addition to making him look foolish against the gigantic Brobdingnagian background, Gulliver's humour serves to blacken European society in contrast to the admirable Brobdingnagian society. The original effect of Gulliver's humour, his patriotism, supplemented by the newly acquired effect of his humour which makes him feel inferior to the Brobdingnagians, results in a stubborn defence of European politics in the face of an obviously superior society. In his talks with the Brobdingnagian king, Gulliver describes England as a utopia, whereupon the king asks leading questions—whether, for example, bishops "were always promoted to that rank on account of their knowledge in religious matters, and the sanctity of their lives." When Gulliver, with a humourist's frankness, answers "no" to the question, the king logically enough dismisses Gulliver's panegyric as meaningless and finds more vice than virtue in English society. The result is a picture of a corrupt and vicious England. But because Gulliver's humour is so apparent, because the king has insufficient evidence and is somewhat affected by his size, the distortion is obvious enough to prevent a reader from seeing the picture as an accurate representation of European society. Instead it is clear that, as in all four voyages, human weaknesses and imperfections have been ridiculed because, owing to the dramatic situation, human virtues have been almost entirely ignored.

In the third voyage, although there are incidental indications of an increasingly sceptical attitude towards his own dear country and governments in general, Gulliver is still too patriotic to see any parallel between the tyrannical government of Laputa and English government. He presents to the eyes of the reader (who of course can see its relevance) the picture of a warped society ruled by fanatical tyrants who are obsessed with over-simplified, mechanical systems; and because he gullibly takes on the violent and distorting humour of the inhabitants, instead of seeing through it, he naïvely describes the Laputian society as a normal society. He reports the Laputian concern with mathematics and music and the consequent lack of concern with history, politics, art, and morality from the point of view of a Laputian citizen, not as an amazed outsider. He describes the operation of the flying island in technical jargon and he tells, unemotionally, how it can be used to starve or wipe out the inhabitants of the lands below. Gulliver's assump-

tion of the Laputian humour results in understatement, emphasizing the degeneracy of Laputa and making clear to the reader the fact that the Laputians represent in enormously exaggerated form the normal manifestations of intellectual pride.

A similar pattern is followed in the rest of the third voyage, where Gulliver visits the Academy of Lagado, Glubdubbdrib, and Luggnagg. Before he visits the Academy, Gulliver admits, "I had myself been a sort of projector in my younger days." His youthful enthusiasm, strengthened by his adoption of the projecting humour which prevails in all the lands of the third voyage, results in a sympathetic and detailed description of the absurd projects of the Academy. In Glubdubbdrib, similarly, Gulliver, instead of seeing (as the reader does) that the over-simplified, dogmatic systems of historians are being exposed, indulges himself in his own over-simplifications. He sees the Roman Senate as an assembly of heroes and demi-gods, while a modern senate is a knot of pedlars, pickpockets, highwaymen, and bullies. And finally, in Luggnagg, Gulliver carries to its logical conclusion the tendency he shows all during the voyage; he develops his own elaborate system in his utopian scheme of the life he would lead as a Struldbrug—only to be awakened from his "unreasonable and unjust" dream by the revelation that the Struldbrugs' intellects degenerate with their bodies.

In the third voyage, then, Swift ridicules human vices and follies resulting from many varieties of intellectual pride—from pride in scientific knowledge, pride in knowledge of the past, pride in knowledge of politics, and, in Gulliver's projection of himself as a Struldbrug, pride in individual intellect. The Laputians with their flappers and the projectors in the Academy are so obviously the result of a very abnormal humour and Gulliver's participation in the humour is so clear that the voyage, like the others, cannot be seen as a straightforward attack.

Most critics agree that Swift has kept himself under control in the first three voyages; it is chiefly the fourth voyage that has offended critics and readers, with the result that Swift has been accused of evil designs and of artistic failure. It is really, however, not Swift who has blundered but those critics and readers who have mistaken Gulliver's humour for Swift's bad humour. In the last voyage Swift employs precisely the same method that I have described above. Gulliver merely continues his usual practice of being influenced by the ruling eccentricities of the lands he visits. To be sure, he loses almost entirely his original nationalistic humour and denounces the English and the whole human race as Yahoos, but if the reader keeps Gulliver's humour in mind—

and Swift calls attention to it throughout—the bitterness of the last voyage can clearly be seen, not as an attack on humanity, but as the startling yet logical climax to Swift's picture of ridiculous potentialities in man and society. The humourist's distortion is greater than in the other voyages, but the nature of Gulliver's deviation from the common-sense path is marked clearly enough for the reader to stay on the path, though Gulliver strays.

It is essential to see that the Houyhnhnms themselves, like the inhabitants of the other lands, have a distorting humour—an abnormal emphasis on moral perfection, resulting from their instinctive inclination to good. They have normal intellects but do not use them in differentiating between good and evil; instead they use instinct which is given the name of "reason," man's distinctive faculty. Gulliver says: "Neither is reason among them a point problematical as with us, where men can argue with plausibility on both sides of a question; but strikes you with immediate conviction; as it must needs do where it is not mingled, obscured, or discoloured by passion and interest." They are animals without animal passions and are instinctively good. Since they possess ordinary human intellects they are of course able to see a difference between good and evil and are extremely conscious of their own perfection. But since they do not use their intellects to distinguish degrees of good and evil they cannot see man's moral problems as problems; they know only answers.

Yet, since except for their humour and their horse-bodies they resemble human beings to a considerable degree, possessing speech, families, government, manners, and a general human economy, Gulliver comes to see them in their own terms as "the perfection of nature" and endeavours, as he says, "as far as my inferior nature was capable, to imitate the Houyhnhnms." The superficial results (Gulliver learns to whinny, he trots, he gives up meat) serve to underline the absurdity of his more fundamental imitation of the Houyhnhnms, his adoption of their notion of reason and their moral standards. It is because he ridiculously demands of man that he be intuitively virtuous that the last voyage contains such complete denunciations of human institutions, professions, and finally of human nature.

Gulliver's account to his Houyhnhnm master in chapters v and vi of a European society made up of wholly vicious people, particularly doctors, lawyers, rulers, and statesmen, is clearly the result of his eyes being blinded and his understanding perverted (though in the important passage at the beginning of chapter vii he maintains that his eyes have been opened and his understanding enlarged) by the perfection

of the Houyhnhnms. Because of his humour and the dramatic situation, he has resolved to sacrifice everything to the Houyhnhnm notion of truth. He is imitating the Houyhnhnms, who have no conception of opinion, lying, or doubting, for whom anything that is not true is false and anything not virtuous is evil. He is, moreover, talking to a Houyhnhnm and in the Houyhnhnm tongue, which contains no words for evil except what the Houyhnhnms "borrow from the deformities or ill qualities of a Yahoo." He therefore describes European society as a society of Yahoos (even though he maintains, still retaining the shell of his naïve patriotism, that he has extenuated the faults of his countrymen). The identification is completely unreasonable; the Yahoos, possessing neither human, imperfect reason nor the civilized pride in human accomplishments—social, physical, intellectual, or moral—which is shown by the other races of *Gulliver's Travels,* demonstrate only the instinctive self-love of untaught animals. They illustrate pure vice without any civilized checks. Yet Gulliver describes all Europeans as Yahoos because he, as he says, sees as human faults qualities "which among us would never be numbered even among human infirmities."

From the structure it is clear that Swift did not present chapters v and vi as an accurate picture of European society. As in the earlier voyages, rulers, statesmen, doctors, and lawyers are picked out for special emphasis, not because of Swift's rage against them but because they were and are traditional scapegoats in literature and folk legend, and because they symbolize most vividly the effects of vices on society and can therefore be used to make those vices most ridiculous. Thus the effects of the vices of the purely avaricious and power-loving rulers and statesmen of the fourth voyage, who send men to war over inconsequential differences in opinion, are demonstrated in Gulliver's horrifying description of war. Gulliver's Yahoo doctors are effective illustrations of avarice or lust for power and honour because they can, if they find themselves mistaken in a prognosis of death, "approve their sagacity to the world by a seasonable dose." The vicious lawyers can take away people's lives as well as their property.

If Swift had restricted himself to the method and materials of chapters v and vi, he might never have acquired his reputation for misanthropy. It is a popular and jocular fiction that lawyers prove that black is white, and such exaggerated pictures as Gulliver draws in chapters v and vi are laughable and not too grimly so, even for doctors, lawyers, statesmen, and rulers. But Swift went too far for the comfort of some readers in letting Gulliver accept the unreasoning, uncontrolled, filthy Yahoos as representatives of basic human nature.

Again it is clear, however, in chapters VII-X that it is Gulliver's humour and situation which have led him to a conclusion which is not Swift's and should not be the reader's. Gulliver has gone insane ("Madmen," says Morris, "are no other than Humourists in Excess"); the seamen who find Gulliver are perfectly right when they conjecture, as Gulliver says, "that my misfortunes had impaired my reason." He goes beyond his Houyhnhnm master, ignoring the master's statement that when he equates humans and Yahoos he is observing only the parity in natures, not in "learning, government, arts, manufactures, and the like." Gulliver credits man with using his reason only to multiply his vices, not realizing that he has already seen, in the third voyage, an exaggerated picture of a society in which human reason was misused but which was still not composed of Yahoos. The Houyhnhnm more moderately finds in Gulliver "all the qualities of a Yahoo, only a little more civilized by some tincture of reason, which however was in a degree as far inferior to the Houyhnhnm race as the Yahoos of their country were to me." The Houyhnhnm's statement directs the reader to the mean between extremes. Gulliver, who should know better, chooses the extreme—and so do the critics who have accepted Gulliver's conclusions as Swift's.

Swift has merely carried to its logical climax his picture of the ridiculous—without, in the last voyage any more than in the others, confusing the ridiculous and the actual. By having Gulliver conclude that all human beings are Yahoos or worse, Swift points to the traditional vices of man as a potential in all men, not merely in the few. But the illustrations of luxury and avarice, for example, in reasonless Yahoos who like best what they get farthest from home, or hoard useless, shiny stones, are so obviously abstractions, drawn by a madman (Gulliver, not Swift), that the reader should be impelled to fill out the abstractions with the saving qualities of civilized man (and might even laugh at the Yahoos). Swift has portrayed society as it might be if the social passions, which enable men to control their appetites, did not operate. The reader who has learned his lessons in the social passions should be able to see that Swift has presented in the Yahoos only what man might be, not what he is.

Because we are presented with Yahoos, not human beings, we do not identify them with ourselves or with the human race. The Yahoos are shockingly obnoxious, but a psychic distance is maintained between Yahoos and readers by the obvious caricature resulting from Gulliver's madness. Gulliver's Yahoo Europe, composed of vicious rulers, statesmen, doctors, and lawyers would inspire fear and indignation in the

reader, as it does in Gulliver, except for the fact that the reader can see that his Europe is not real but the product of a disordered imagination. A similar pattern is followed throughout the *Travels*; the vices and follies depicted in the four voyages have effects on people like ourselves but with whom we cannot identify ourselves. Gulliver of course does not perceive the psychic distance but identifies himself as a Lilliputian under the rule of a tyrant, as a contemptible creature in Brobdingnag, as a projector in the third voyage, and as a Yahoo in Houyhnhnm-land. The reader, however, who can see that Gulliver is gullible in being moved by fear, anger, indignation, or shame, can look at the various civilizations objectively, without being personally involved. The book can have the "pleasing" effect of Horatian ridicule.

Gulliver's Travels can and should be read, then, as a work of art rather than as a sermon. Gulliver of course sees his book as a sermon; but when he says finally, "my purpose was not to amuse thee but to inform thee," he is still a humourist, an enthusiast bent on imposing his opinions on others. For the careful reader, who does not take this remark any more seriously than he takes Gulliver's identification of men and Yahoos, the book is a comedy according to Aristotle's definition, "not a dramatic invective but a dramatic picture of the ridiculous." It is a sermon—or a tragedy, as W. B. C. Watkins has called it[5]—only if we identify Swift and Gulliver. If we see Gulliver not as Dean Swift or as Hamlet but as a Don Quixote, a humourist, *Gulliver's Travels* is in the tradition of great comedy, offering hope for man's situation rather than offering heroic despair because man cannot achieve perfection. Even Gulliver sees hope at the end of his book; he has become somewhat reconciled to things as they are—to death, even to vices in society. Still the zealous reformer, he delivers a final sermon on pride. But there his difference from Swift appears most clearly; Swift's belief that *Gulliver's Travels* would be a classic depended on pride's not being eradicated but continuing to prevail. If pride disappeared the work would lose all of its point.

Man being what he is, neither Yahoo nor Houyhnhnm, *Gulliver's Travels* has not lost its point. The book still presents a dramatic picture against which we can measure the ridiculousness of modern man and society—partly because Swift did not try to impose his opinions or his eighteenth-century political programme on his readers. Gulliver, for once, is speaking for Swift when he says, as he takes leave of the reader, "I forbear descanting further and rather leave the judicious reader to his own remarks and applications." Swift challenges the reader to make

[5]*Perilous Balance* (Princeton University Press, 1939), 4–6.

his own applications, by using as a narrator a humourist who so distorts the normal world of experience that the reader can find his own mean between extremes. The ironic art of *Gulliver's Travels* deals with extremes, with black-white contrasts, and it is logical that the ironic view of a stubbornly imperfect world should be gray, perhaps a dirty shade, rather than white. But there is a long tradition behind this view of life, and there is still overwhelming evidence of its validity from the experience of most human beings.

STEFAN GEORGE: POET AND PROPHET[1]

KARL F. HELLEINER

KARL Lamprecht's three volumes *Zur jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit,* which form a supplement to the author's *Deutsche Geschichte,* were intended to set forth the distinctive features of German life about the turn of the present century. Having given a comprehensive survey of two thousand years of German history, the writer decided to offer his readers a conspectus, not only of the political and socio-economic trends, but also, and perhaps chiefly, of the main intellectual and aesthetic currents of his own time. With this purpose in mind Lamprecht made an attempt to analyse the aims and methods of creative production in the fields of contemporary music, painting, and literature. His illustrative material included some specimens of recent lyrical poetry, among them two or three pieces by Stefan George.[2]

Most of Lamprecht's readers must have been surprised at this selection. Why should the historian have singled out as representative a poet whose work, while known to literary connoisseurs, was at that time still unfamiliar to the majority even of such Germans as considered themselves well educated? Judging it from the vantage point of the nineteen-fifties, one can, of course, only commend Lamprecht's choice. It speaks well for the acumen of the Leipzig professor (or perhaps of one of his research assistants) that he should have sensed, even though he could not fully grasp, the epochal significance of Stefan George.

What was it that made Lamprecht and others first listen to the voice of the young poet? Assuredly, it was not, or at any rate not primarily, the content and meaning of his poems. George's earliest books of verse[3] contained visions, but no "stories"; still less were they intended to convey a "message." The poet is known to have stated as his firm conviction that "in poetry as in all artistic pursuits anyone who is still driven by a desire to 'say' something or to 'effectuate' something is not worthy to enter even the propylon of art."[4] And again: "Not its

[1]A paper read before the Toronto Branch of the English Goethe Society, November 20, 1951.

[2]Karl Lamprecht, *Zur jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit,* I (*Deutsche Geschichte,* erster Ergänzungsband) (Berlin, 1902), 244 ff.

[3]*Hymns* (Berlin, 1890); *Pilgrimages* (Vienna, 1891); *Algabal* (Paris, 1892); *The Books of Eclogues and Eulogies, of Legends and Lays and of The Hanging Gardens* (Berlin, 1895); *The Year of the Soul* (Berlin, 1897).

[4]Stefan George, *Gesamt-Ausgabe der Werke* (Berlin, 1927), XVII, 85 (my translation).

meaning decides the value of poetry (else it would be something like wisdom or learning), but its form."[5]

This emphasis on the purely formal value of artistic creations would have been immediately understood in the France of Verlaine and Mallarmé. In Germany, however, it ran counter to the prevailing beliefs of a generation that had, somewhat belatedly, embraced the gospel of Naturalism. The poet's proud refusal to turn preacher, teacher, or mere story-teller was a challenge to writers who had recently discovered the virtues and vices of the common man, and the exigencies of the "social question."

Yet despite their fundamental differences regarding the aims and methods of artistic production, George and the devotees of Naturalism had a common starting point. It was their passionate desire to rescue German poetry from utter oblivion and contempt. The youth of the country were fast losing all interest in poetic creation. They were tired of the monotonous rhythms and tedious rhymes of traditional verse-mongering, bored by its pale and lifeless imagery, and disgusted with a conventional vocabulary whose limited fund contained only time-worn and worthless coins. Verse-making seemed to be an innocuous, if utterly futile, pastime of soulful women and effeminate youths, not unlike the empty needlework with which ladies of leisure kept themselves occupied. Soiled by the irreverent hands of pedantic schoolmasters and literary critics, even the great poetic masterpieces of the past had lost much of their lustre.

In one of the poems of the Prelude to *The Tapestry of Life* George has described the feeling of weary despair among the few who still remembered and longed for the solemn and sonorous sounds of ancient verse, but dared not hope ever again to listen to great poetry in an age that seemed to have exhausted its creative powers.

> The rabble's touch has tainted every word,
> In foolish mouths sweet sounds grow stale and cold.
> Sadly you ask: will e'er again be heard
> The thunderous tone of temples as of old?[6]

These lines were written in retrospect. For the wistful question whether the poetic word would ever regain its pristine radiance, dignity, and power had meanwhile been answered in the affirmative. Stefan George himself had brought about the renaissance. At long last

[5] *Ibid.*
[6] George, *Gesamt-Ausgabe*, V, 22 (my translation).

> Dann fleckt auf jedem wort der menge stempel
> Der toren mund macht süsse laute schal
> Ihr klagt: du ton der donner ton der tempel
> Ergreifst du uns allmächtig noch einmal?

the country of Goethe and Hölderlin had once more given birth to a poet who, like Horace, could claim the power to teach his people's sons and daughters *carmina non prius audita*.

"Songs never heard before" George's poems certainly were. No one who hears or reads one of his works for the first time can fail to perceive, however dimly, the manifestation of a strange new force in German literature. But while it is easy to point to a number of novel features in George's poetry—the tense rhythm and the rolling tone of many of his verses are perhaps the most obvious—it is almost impossible to discourse upon the innermost secret of the poet's language. We cannot hope to make visible the magic power of that new voice, any more than we can expect to account for the efficacy of spells and charms.

Suffice it therefore to speak in hints and halting words of the dark-glowing or dazzling images in *Algabal's* imperial underworld; of the luminous atmosphere which pervades the *Book of Eclogues* like the cool crystalline light of early dawn; of the measured gestures and gracious smiles of cultured young men and women whose memory the poet celebrates in his *Eulogies*; of the spirit of mystic piety and knightly fidelity which he recaptures in the *Book of Legends and Lays*; of the changing moods which he conjures up in the oriental setting of *The Hanging Gardens*—the cruel lust of conquest, the languor of noontide dreams under tropical trees, and the profound sadness of "one who has lost a kingdom"; and of the play of light and shade which weaves about the fading flowers and fawn-coloured leaves of an autumnal park in *The Year of the Soul*.

The following near-perfect renderings by Olga Marx and Ernst Morwitz of two poems chosen from *Algabal* and *The Year of the Soul* may serve, better than any literary analysis could do, to convey an impression of George's art.

The first of these poems calls up a vision of a fantastic room in a subterranean palace contrived by Algabal, that half-mythical pontiff-emperor of late Roman days.

> The hall of yellow glitter and of sun!
> On level dome among the stars it reigns,
> And from the fiery crater flashes run:
> Topazes interfused with amber grains.
>
> The flat and unembellished golden tiles
> —Entire towns' and kingdoms' looted store—
> Are polished mirrors ranged in serried files,
> And lion skins are broad upon the floor.

But there is One whose glances never quail
Before the glaring crown of worlds, and thrice
A thousand heavy amphorae exhale
The scent of citron, ambergris, and spice.[7]

It is a far cry from this weird dream of unbounded wealth and blinding radiance to the following poem with its soft melancholy strain and subdued autumnal colours.

Up to the gate and back again we wander
Between the beeches with their gold and gloom,
And glancing through the bars, we pause to ponder
The almond tree beyond, in second bloom.

We search for benches where there is no shade
And alien voices never fret. In dreams
Your arm in mine and mine in yours is laid,
And we are bathed in long and mellow beams,

And feel beholden when the sunflakes glisten
Around us from the leaves alive with sound,
And only lift our heads to look and listen
When fruit, too rich with ripeness, taps the ground.[8]

[7] *The Works of Stefan George*, rendered into English by Olga Marx and Ernst Morwitz, University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, no. 2 (Chapel Hill, 1949), 28 ff. (George, *Gesamt-Ausgabe*, II, 93).

Der saal des gelben gleisses und der sonne.
Sie herrscht auf flacher kuppel unter sternen,
In blitzen schnellen aus dem feuerbronne
Topase untermengt mit bernstein-kernen.

An allen seiten aufgereiht als spiegel
—Gesamter städte ganzer staaten beute—
Die ungeschmückten platten goldnen ziegel
Und an der erde breiten löwenhäute.

Nur nicht des Einen scharfen blick zu blenden
Vermag die stechend grelle weltenkrone
Und dreimal tausend schwere urnen spenden
Den geist von amber weihrauch und zitrone.

[8] *Works*, 82 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe*, IV, 15).

Wir schreiten auf und ab im reichen flitter
Des buchenganges beinah bis zum tore
Und sehen aussen in dem feld vom gitter
Den mandelbaum zum zweiten mal im flore.

Wir suchen nach den schattenfreien bänken
Dort wo uns niemals fremde stimmen scheuchten,
In träumen unsre arme sich verschränken,
Wir laben uns am langen milden leuchten

Wir fühlen dankbar wie zu leisem brausen
Von wipfeln strahlenspuren auf uns tropfen
Und blicken nur and horchen wenn in pausen
Die reifen früchte an den boden klopfen.

From the specimens just given it should be apparent that the new language owed nothing to the literary technique of those of George's contemporaries who listened to the coarse and vulgar idiom of the Berlin slum-dwellers, or tried to imitate the poor and halting utterance of Austrian peasants and Silesian weavers.

Nor was it to be expected that the aristocratic poet of *Algabal* and *The Hanging Gardens,* who "locked" himself "in dreams and shunned the crowd,"[9] would ever descend into the market place, and debate controversial issues of a philosophical, political, or social nature. Indeed, his guiding angel, whose epiphany George celebrates in the Prelude to *The Tapestry of Life,* had warned him in stern words to keep aloof from the noisy quarrels of the schools:

> . . . you may no longer share the feuds
> Even of the wise.[10]

It must therefore have come as a surprise to some at least of George's early friends and followers when the artist in middle life appeared to abandon his self-imposed seclusion and reticence, and, like the poet of the *Divine Comedy,* began to castigate the baseness and corruption of his times in verses trembling with scorn and passionate indignation. Like Dante, whose fate he depicts in one of the poems of *The Seventh Ring,* George had long

> . . . burned with shame
> That evil leaders sacked the realm, the City;[11]

and, like the Florentine, he finally flung his challenge at the tempters and despoilers. The following poem has been chosen as representative of George's new prophetic style.

THE ANTICHRIST

"He strides from the mountain, he stands near the pines,
We saw it: He changes the water to wine,
His voice can evoke the departed!"

If only you heard how I laugh through the dark!
My hour has come, now the quarry is snared,
Now fish fill the nets with their swarming.

The mob is afoot, both the foolish and wise,
They crash through the cornfields and tear up the trees,
Make way for the train of the Risen!

The sky has no marvels I cannot confer,
A hairsbreadth amiss, but you do not discern
The hoax, for your senses are blunted.

[9] *Works,* 93 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe,* IV, 59).
[10] *Works,* 121 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe,* V, 18).
[11] *Works,* 157 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe,* VI-VII, 8).

Instead of the laboured and rare, I extol
The facile: from clay I make something like gold,
Like perfumes, and resins, and spices.

And what the great prophet eschewed I have taught:
The art without clearing or sowing or toil
To live on the stores of the furrow.

The lord-over-vermin extends his domains,
No treasure escapes him, his joys never wane.
And down with the rest, with the rebels!

You cheer, you are charmed by demoniac ruse,
Exhaust the old honeys, and only when doom
Approaches you feel you are beggared,

And hang out your tongues, but the bucket is dry.
You flounder like kine through the flaming corral—
And grimly the trumpet is sounded![12]

[12]*Works,* 179 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe,* VI-VII, 56 ff). (I have changed the translation of the last line but one.)

DER WIDERCHRIST

"Dort kommt er vom berge, dort steht er im hain!
Wir sahen es selber, er wandelt in wein
Das wasser und spricht mit den toten."

O könntet ihr hören mein lachen bei nacht:
Nun schlug meine stunde, nun füllt sich das garn,
Nun strömen die fische zum hamen.

Die weisen die toren—toll wälzt sich das volk,
Entwurzelt die bäume, zerklittert das korn,
Macht bahn für den zug des Erstandnen.

Kein werk ist des himmels das ich euch nicht tu.
Ein haarbreit nur fehlt und ihr merkt nicht den trug
Mit euren geschlagenen sinnen.

Ich schaff euch für alles was selten und schwer
Das Leichte, ein ding das wie gold ist aus lehm,
Wie duft ist und saft ist und würze—

Und was sich der grosse profet nicht getraut:
Die kunst ohne roden und säen und baun
Zu saugen gespeicherte kräfte.

Der Fürst des Geziefers verbreitet sein reich,
Kein schatz der ihm mangelt, kein glück das ihm weicht . . .
Zu grund mit dem rest der empörer!

Ihr jauchzet, enzückt von dem teuflischen schein,
Verprasset was blieb von dem früheren seim
Und fühlt erst die not vor dem ende.

Dann hängt ihr die zunge am trocknenden trog,
Irrt ratlos wie vieh durch den brennenden hof . . .
Und schrecklich erschallt die posaune.

It may be of some interest to observe that this poem, which had been published long before the First World War, was destined to assume concrete significance forty years later. As Fabian von Schlabrendorff reports (*Revolt against Hitler,*

Another poem, taken from *The Star of the Covenant,* evokes the shadow of Nietzsche, that hapless visionary, who had correctly diagnosed the moral malaise of modern civilization, but whose words of warning had remained unheeded.

> And one emerged who keen as flash and steel
> Laid open chasms and divided camps,
> Reversed your Here to fashion out a There,
> Who dinned into your heads that you were mad,
> With such insistence that his throat was cracked.
> And you? The shrewd or dull, the false or true,
> You acted as if nothing had occurred.
> You hear, and stare, you talk, and laugh, and breed!
> The warner passed! The wheel is hurtling down
> Into the void with none to block its passage.[13]

It will be seen that George, for all his concern with the present and its problems, did not become a "political" poet in the sense in which Herwegh or Freiligrath had been political poets, namely, verse-making partisans. George's *Kulturkritik* moves on an altogether different plane. Nevertheless, when the poet first raised his voice in ruthless curse, command, and condemnation, he did incur the risk of being misunderstood by friend and foe alike. In the opening poem of *The Seventh Ring* George refers not without bitterness to the lack of insight with which many of his contemporaries received his change from a hymnic or lyrical to an accusatory and prophetic tone. Some there were who condescendingly acclaimed the new poetry as a praiseworthy departure from what they mistook for pale and decadent aestheticism.

> I seemed a prince inebriate with perfumes
> Who—swayed in languors—scanned his even measures
> In fragile charm or cool and poised aloofness
> And wan with glories that are not of earth.

London, 1948, 91), Claus Schenk Count Stauffenberg, the German nobleman who carried out the attempt on Hitler's life in 1944, had been one of George's intimate disciples. He knew much of his master's poetry by heart, and his favourite poem was "Der Widerchrist," which he would recite to friends who, like himself, were determined to destroy the kingdom of the Evil One.

[13] *Works,* 254 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe,* VIII, 34).

> Einer stand auf der scharf wie blitz und stahl
> Die klüfte aufriss und die lager schied
> Ein Drüben schuf durch umkehr eures Hier . . .
> Der euren wahnsinn so lang in euch schrie
> Mit solcher wucht dass ihm die kehle barst.
> Und ihr? ob dumpf ob klug ob falsch ob echt
> Vernahmt und saht als wäre nichts geschehn . . .
> Ihr handelt weiter sprecht und lacht und heckt.
> Der warner ging . . . dem rad das niederrollt
> Zur leere greift kein arm mehr in die speiche.

Others sincerely deplored, or pretended to be shocked that the high priest of beauty should have forsaken his holy shrine, and taken to preaching and prophesying.

> You sigh: "Such majesty and so debased!
> The song of sunlit clouds deformed to screams!"

However, the poet protests that both praise and censure of his work are based on false premises.

> You see a change, but I have done as always;
> And he who blows fanfares today and hurls
> A jet of fluid fire, knows: Tomorrow
> The sum of grandeur, force, and grace may spring
> From the untroubled fluting of a boy.[14]

Indeed, the volumes of poetry from Stefan George's later period,[15] while they do resound, for the most part, with stern injunctions and angry execrations, still contain verses as lithe and tender as any written by the poet in his youth.

It must be admitted, however, that George's spreading fame and his powerful impact on the thought and beliefs of two generations of Germans were due, mainly, to his prophetic message. Appreciation of high poetry must always remain a privilege of the few. The seer, even though his word be "not for common sharing,"[16] can count on a wider audience, especially in times when man's ever-present existential anxiety is deepened by the approach and advent of a great historical crisis. It was such a crucial moment in their history that made the Jewish people receptive to the warnings of their prophets in the age of Assur and Babylon. It was a similar crisis—the First World War with its aftermath of national shame and moral confusion—that caused an intellectual *élite* among the Germans to recognize the lonely seer in their midst, and to acknowledge, gratefully or grudgingly, his spiritual authority.[17]

The book which embodied the main substance of George's message, *The Star of the Covenant,* was published in 1913, on the very eve of the great cataclysm. Composed in a sustained tone of prophetic exal-

[14] *Works,* 156 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe,* VI-VII, 6 ff.).

[15] *The Tapestry of Life* (1900); *The Seventh Ring* (1907); *The Star of the Covenant* (1913); *The Kingdom Come* (1928).

[16] *Works,* 94 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe,* IV, 52).

[17] See, for instance, Hans Carossa, *Führung und Geleit* (Leipzig, 1933), 85 ff. This author's generous tribute to George's formative influence on his contemporaries is all the weightier, since he did not in any sense belong in the poet's "circle" of friends and disciples. Thomas Mann, too, has testified to the national prestige of "the poet, who began as *parnassien* but whose art and personality are today a wholly German concern." *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (Berlin, 1920), 49 (my translation).

tation, this volume of one hundred poems contained ecstatic prayers and impassioned imprecations, dire predictions of impending doom, and joyous tidings of a sacred dawn. Even though their meaning was not seldom veiled in dark symbols and secret allusions, those solemn verses cast a powerful spell over readers and listeners. Like oracles of old they seemed to reveal in hieratic images the hidden destinies of the body politic.

When Stefan George raised his anguished voice once more, some of his prophecies had already come true. The apocalyptic horsemen had been unleashed, and for three years they had spread death and destruction across the length and breadth of the continent. The poet, who had remained silent when the literary rabble greeted the outbreak of hostilities with silly boasts and unseemly shouts, now at the height of the conflict decided to offer his disciples a word of guidance. In a long poem George expounded his views on the meaning of the war. He derided and denounced both the hollow and hypocritical catchwords of would-be patriots and the cant phrases of foolish or crafty apostles of peace. To him the sanguinary spectacle was neither a glorious display of national virtue and strength nor a struggle for the realization of humanitarian ideals: it was the agony of a diseased world, a cosmic catharsis, to be endured in silence, awe, and pious resignation.

> You shall not cheer. No rise will mark the end,
> But only downfalls, many and inglorious.
> Monsters of lead and iron, tubes and rods
> Escape their maker's hand and rage unruly.
> Who saw his comrade crushed to pulp and fragments,
> Who lived the life of vermin in the broken
> And desecrated earth, must laugh with hatred
> At speeches once heroic, now deceitful.
> The ancient god of battles is no more.
> And in decay a fevered world is sickening
> Toward death.[18]

But amidst all the turmoil and behind the travail of a prostrate present, Stefan George was able to descry happy auguries of a fairer

[18] *Works*, 291 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe*, IX, 30).

> Zu jubeln ziemt nicht: kein triumf wird sein,
> Nur viele untergänge ohne würde . . .
> Des schöpfers hand entwischt rast eigenmächtig
> Unform von blei und blech, gestäng und rohr.
> Der selbst lacht grimm wenn falsche heldenreden
> Von vormals klingen der als brei und klumpen
> Den bruder sinken sah, der in der schandbar
> Zerwühlten erde hauste wie geziefer . . .
> Der alte Gott der schlachten ist nicht mehr.
> Erkrankte welten fiebern sich zu ende
> In dem getob.

future. Though he could not but deeply mourn over his country's defeat and humiliation, he did not despair of its ultimate fate. Indeed, the poet, whose voice had long been that of one crying in the wilderness, could not fail to derive high hopes from the evidence that his ideas were gaining ground among the best of Germany's youth. He must have been proud to see many of his younger friends receiving important appointments in the leading German institutions of higher learning. He knew that men like Friedrich Gundolf, Friedrich Wolters, Ernst Kantorowicz, Wolfram von der Steinen, and many others were spreading the seeds of his teaching among enthusiastic students; and he realized that

> unstained by venal mobs,
> By threadbare minds and follies steeped in poison,
> A younger generation rises toward him.[19]

George was confident that in times to come this new generation, reared in a wholesome spiritual climate, would give birth to a King of Glory, a stern lawgiver and heroic leader, who would guide his people toward the goal envisaged by his prophet.

> He breaks the chains and sweeps aside the rubble,
> He scourges home the lost to lasting law,
> Where lord again is lord, the great is great
> Again, where poise is poise. He fastens
> The true device upon the nation's banner.
> Through tempests and the dread fanfares of dawning,
> He leads his tried and faithful to the work
> Of sober day and founds the Kingdom Come.[20]

Stefan George did not altogether escape the gravest perils prophets and teachers have to contend with: that of seeing their words misinterpreted by foolish disciples or, worse still, that of having their message insidiously twisted by faithless followers, or monstrously perverted by false apostles. It is not surprising that the demoniac powers which began to enthral the German people after 1933 should have tried to appropriate for their sinister purposes the symbols and language of one whose words had the greatest weight with the nation's youth. That they should also have made a clumsy attempt to enlist the personal services of the poet merely betrayed their purblindness. We now know that Hitler's government had the temerity to offer Stefan George the presidency of their Academy for Literature "with an annual endowment either to be retained by himself or to be awarded as he wished."[21]

[19] *Works*, 296 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe*, IX, 39).
[20] *Works*, 297 (*Gesamt-Ausgabe*, IX, 39).
[21] Ernst Morwitz, in Stefan George, *Poems* (New York, 1943), p. 10.

It goes without saying that the poet refused this offer. "He did not even answer it himself, but asked [Ernst Morwitz, one of his younger friends] to communicate his decision to the government. . . . Then, as an unambiguous protest against totalitarian compulsion and the increasing misinterpretation and misapplication of his ideas and his words, he left his country and spent the rest of his life as a voluntary exile in Switzerland."[22] There, on Lago Maggiore, Stefan George died on December 4, 1933. In accordance with his wishes he was buried in the village cemetery of Minusio. The body of one of Germany's greatest poets—like that of her greatest emperor—rests in foreign soil.

[22]*Ibid.*

Letters in Canada: 1951

Part II

VI. FRENCH-CANADIAN LETTERS — W. E. Collin

A wave of mysticism passed over Quebec this year. Quite a number of books are significant as expressions of man's quest for purity and reveal, by their vocabulary and dramatic texture, a dependence on the works of St. John of the Cross. Setting out with Father Jacques-E. Ménard's book on M. Olier we can proceed to study the forms mystical experience is taking in our times. *Les Dons du Saint-Esprit chez monsieur Olier* is a Sulpician's study of the inner life of a representative of the seventeenth-century French school of religious writers, a man who, as founder of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, played an important role in moulding spiritual life in this country. M. Ménard has a main purpose and several subsidiary purposes: to refute those who would ascribe M. Olier's tribulations to natural causes; to dissociate him from "melancholy" and "Augustinian pessimism"; to remove the taint of "quietism"; to ameliorate his "rigorism"; and, principally, to prove that M. Olier's inner struggles followed a progress in perfection identical with that described by the great Spanish mystics of the preceding century. The opinion of religious historians like the Abbé Bremond, for whom M. Olier was a neurotic, is, so M. Ménard thinks, conditioned by "a modern psychological current which explains everything by the subconscious." "A well-educated character," M. Ménard believes, "can dominate the subconscious." Referring to M. Olier's doctrine on the subject of original sin another writer, W. Faber, remarks: "To say the least, he has pushed it to the extremest limits which orthodoxy will allow." And Parkman says of M. Olier: "He signalized his piety, it is true, by the most disgusting exploits of self-mortification; but, at the same time, he was strenuous in his efforts to reform the people and the clergy." Using what he calls "the method of convergence," M. Ménard first examines the stuff of M. Olier's inner life as given in his *Mémoires* with tools provided by modern psychologists and then applies to it descriptions left by St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, whose writings definitely influenced M. Olier's doctrine. "Physical impotence, indecision, deficient memory, the sense of an inner void," says M. Ménard, "may be fruits of neurasthenia, but again they may be fruits of purifications of the senses and the spirit as St. John of the Cross has described them." And his principal labour consists in systematizing evidence provided by the *Mémoires* to prove that "God introduced the founder of St. Sulpice into the sixth

'mansion' of St. Theresa's 'Inner Castle' "; that the founder's soul progressed through the dark night of trials as described by St. John of the Cross, in which it was purged of attachment to human and created things by the gifts of intelligence and wisdom and prepared for mystic marriage with God; in short, to prove that M. Olier's doctrine is in line with that of the great mystics whose orthodoxy is unquestioned.

II

It may seem a far stretch from St. John of the Cross to modern fiction; yet the very word "night," so frequently used by novelists, and the very label "black novels," commonly attached to certain recent works, not to speak of the dense spiritual experience we find in them, naturally turn our minds to that celebrated mystic. First, however, let us look at novels which are fairly white. They are stories of human lives and loves; they have certain descriptive and satiric qualities; what they lack is depth. Charlotte Savary's *Et la lumière fut,* whose title promises an adventure of the spirit, is, to say the least, unrewarding. Ghislaine Reid's *Il vit en face* follows the emotional relations between a man and his wife from the time they set up house to the day when the man is left a widower. These lives are revealed at no greater depth than can be plumbed from the window of a neighbouring house by a young lady destined to grow old in jealousy because she is in love with the man. Gustave Proulx's *Chambre à louer* is a mediocre piece of work: his characters are undistinguished, not only socially, but emotionally; their pleasures are commonplace. The writing is on a level with the people, replete with anglicisms. Adrienne Maillet's *L'Ombre sur le bonheur* is a romance that might please a schoolgirl like its heroine Christine, a shoe-maker's daughter, who marries a wealthy young man and goes on an extended tour through Europe. Despite the title, the writing in Liliane Vien's *Péché d'amour* conveys little conviction of sin or abiding love. Simone Bussières' *L'Héritier* touches deep human instincts. Louise, a disappointed spinster, loved Pierre but Pierre married Jeanne. Finding that Jeanne was sterile, Pierre, who wanted an heir, turned to Louise. And Louise reflected: "To save the world that she loved, the Mother of God gave her son," and so justified her sin. The words of a priest on the beauty of motherhood comfort Louise whose mother-love, growing in intensity despite the fact that her child is possessed by Pierre, is the strongest note in the book. The life of a newspaper man as described in Charles Hamel's *Solitude de la chair* is a round of visits to art galleries, meetings with temperamental artists, a succession of love affairs and editorial crises. But underneath

there is an unsatisfied lonely soul. "Man is condemned to live alone," exclaims André one day and wonders if each man "does not evolve in his own solitude, without being able to penetrate the solitude of another or receive the other into his solitude." At one point in the book the author penetrates to the core of André's weakness: "Never had André Laurent experienced the withering bleakness of a life in which all spirituality was absent as at this moment. He who had thought himself so strong, suddenly saw himself as he really was, morally: a weak creature, an incomplete, impotent being. Leaning abruptly over the abyss of his inner void he was seized with dizziness." If M. Hamel had done more to dramatize that inner experience his book would have awakened a deeper response in the reader.

One of the best of this year's novels, Roger Viau's *Au milieu, la montagne,* is a good portrayal of the difficulties and frustrated dreams of people who live on the margin of existence. The scene is Montreal. In the east of the city lives Jacqueline, in the west lives Gilbert; and between them stands the mountain. On the mountain Jacqueline met Gilbert who gradually, as their friendship grew, answered her longing for higher things by revealing to her an unknown world of books, pictures, and landscapes, a new world of genteel speech and gracious manners. Jacqueline and Gilbert love each other, but convention in the guise of Gilbert's mother comes between them and Jacqueline is thrown back into her own circle.

> She approached the little dwelling whose walls sweated with dampness. She sank into the black tunnel as into nothingness. She entered her home, not as into a port of call, but as into a refuge where wreckage is cast up to rot.
>
> The west was afar off.
>
> She remembered two lines Gilbert had taught her.
>
> Two lines of Kipling.

In a story entitled *Sur le chemin de Damas* Mgr Arsène Goyette has used the novel as an instrument to uproot eighteenth-century thought and bring the youth of Canada back to the truth of the Church. It is a question of combatting "the ravages of free thought" and "dangerous amusements": dancing, "cursed novels," theatres, "yellow newspapers," alcohol, the "infernal productions" of George Sand, Balzac, and Dumas, which render Canadian woman unfit for the role of Christian mother. In this story Paul de Chazy, the young seigneur of Bleury on the Richelieu, represents a departure from the tradition of his parents since he is a man of "advanced ideas," a free-thinker, Free Mason, Voltairean. He is in love with Joséline des

Ormaux, grand-daughter of the famous Dollard. Eventually, Paul is converted by a Dominican missionary and decides to become a zouave to defend the Papacy. Two days after putting on the uniform of a zouave, while scouting along the Damascus Road, he falls wounded. Decorated with the Order of St. Gregory the Great, he returns to Canada to wed Joséline amidst great rejoicing. Besides the lesson Mgr Goyette wishes to teach there is material in his book to support the thesis which attributes the belated appearance of the French-Canadian novel to the antipathy of the religious conscience.

Harry Bernard recently published a study of regional literature in the United States which revealed his sensitivity to local landscape, customs, and conflicts of race. In a new novel, *Les Jours sont longs,* he sounds a note of tragedy in the heart of a Métis girl in northern Quebec. The story, recorded in the first person, is slim. A Montreal man, in an endeavour to drown his memory of a former love, resolves to live in a shack in the northern bush country. As the rigours of winter become too much for him, he thinks of turning south again but Cardinal, a Métis who keeps a sort of general store and hotel in association with lumber companies, persuades him to stay, promising him a job as book-keeper. He is destined to fall in love with one of Cardinal's daughters, Adèle. The life she sees about her, that of shanty men, guides, and debauched tourists, disgusts Adèle. To escape it she becomes a school-teacher. Fascinated by the girl's strong rebellious spirit the Montrealer proposes to marry her. Cardinal and his wife expect this to happen but the girl refuses, saying she loves him too well to marry him. One evening her place is vacant at the supper table and, after a search, her body is found in the lake near an upturned canoe. The doctor confirms the mother's suspicion that Adèle would shortly have borne the child of a boy she had met in the city. While enjoying the picnics and the orgies in Cardinal's hotel the reader is sorry that M. Bernard has merely suggested, without probing, the inner drama of Adèle's life.

Though not told in the first person Louis Dantin's *Les Enfances de Fanny* is a piece of autobiography as passionate and lyrical as Solomon's Song. Dantin, whose fame up to now has rested on his poetry and criticism, lived a cloistered life at the Harvard University Press, devoted to intellectual pursuits. Almost blind—he died in 1945 at the age of eighty—he worked on a novel which he did not care to publish during his lifetime as he thought it would cause a scandal. " 'Fanny' is a slice of my life," he confided to a friend. "It is a memento of a time when I was completely lost, when I begged for affection as a

poor man asks for bread. Then, I defied the world's conventions and today I am not ashamed of that attachment: a human feeling belongs to humanity. 'Fanny' is a debt of gratitude. By settling it I have stripped off the last shred and laid my heart bare." Dantin has not only paid a debt of gratitude to a woman he loved; he joins with the negroes in their outcry against an age-old injustice. Fanny was a negress who grew up in Virginia. She was a wild thing with jungle sap running in her veins. Instead of learning her lessons she romped with boys like Charlie Ross. The schoolmaster chided her, comforted her when she wept, and married her when he became too intimate with her. At nineteen she was mother of four children whom she lulled to sleep with "Grandfather's Clock." Fanny's heart-breaks began when her husband left her for a woman of his own age. Later, she came to Roxbury, a suburb of Boston, to devote herself to her children. But Roxbury was not the negro paradise Fanny had imagined. Noting her sadness, a neighbour woman advised her to get religion. She went to hear an evangelist and came away with a word: "Peace. It's marvellous!" Offering her services as a housekeeper, she came to know Donat Sylvain, an artist employed by a publishing firm. The woman who had been his companion for three years had left him, weary of his meditative tastes and hermit habits. He had vowed no woman would ever make him suffer again, but he had tired of housekeeping and he felt confident that in the presence of a coloured woman he would be secure. Fanny was taken into his apartment on condition that she would not make her presence felt, would not even hum her lullabies. During Sylvain's absence one day, she comes by accident upon a sketch of a dark lady whom she recognizes as herself. "If I were white," she reflects, "he would not be ashamed. . . . If I were white he would say frankly, 'You are not bad. I have drawn your picture. Here it is.' " Because Sylvain was a symbolist poet Fanny was, in his eyes, a distant relative of the Shulamite of whom Solomon sang. "Her body, beyond its real contours, became a precious jewel-case of mirages and symbols." He saw her as a child of the African jungle fragrant with the perfume of her virgin nature. Her voice cried aloud Dahomey songs and murmured prayers to fetiches. And because of this he loved her, native, a spontaneous growth like a dawn or a star, springing from her original humus. He gave her a ring, as a symbol that only death could part them. It was a moment when new leaders were emerging to denounce injustices and preach a war to end them. On the wave of this antipathy Charlie Ross comes to Roxbury. His negro blood boils to see Fanny in the bonds of a white man and he resolves

to liberate her. In attempting this he causes her death. Dying, Fanny mumbles the names of her children, Sylvain's words: "Till death us do part," "Swing low, sweet chariot," "Tic-toc, Tic-toc," and "Peace. It's marvellous!"

Yves Thériault has published two books this year, quite different in style: one in his characteristic manner, *Le Dompteur d'ours;* the other a satire on French-Canadian piety, *Les Vendeurs du temple.* In the latter the priest of Saint-Léonide announces to his flock that he is going to move the cemetery; he wants to erect a "Way of the Cross" which will no doubt bring spiritual favours to the parish. There is general consternation among the parishioners at the prospect of disturbing the dead; but the project is dropped as soon as oil is discovered at the spot in question. Disturbing the dead is no longer a matter for concern; the living can enjoy the prospect of great wealth. The priest departs to another parish. What matters, of course, is the satiric art of the author in characterizing human types: priest, mayor, undertaker, doctor, lawyer, and all. Sometimes his tone is gentle. Modulating his voice to the lyrical suavity of the Abbé Savard, M. Thériault whispers: "There reigned over all Saint-Léonide that happy quietude, that silence and that immobility that pleased the priest so much. It was a balm. It was a subtle tonic which he gulped every time some trouble invaded his soul." At other times, when he touches the sin of the flesh which "in the province of Quebec exceeds all others in horror and punishment," he becomes hilariously malicious, as in his description of Camélienne Doré's confession, or indulges in sex symbolism, as in his description of a young virgin's imagination. The Bear-Tamer, in the story with that title, is an outlander; he turns up at a village in the mountains, announces himself as Hermann the man who fights bears, asks for food, and stays a few days while a bear is trapped for him. With the animal before him in chains, Hermann collects what coins he can from the excited villagers, steps into the church to pray for success, and escapes into the forest. Upon this slight structure Thériault weaves his drama of vital passion. In it figure village women who, under the spell of Hermann's masculinity and freedom, rebel against their humdrum, aimless everyday existence and wish only to cling to him and follow him. As chapter follows chapter the reader imagines that every house in this mountain village is a cage in which some wild, vital creature is stifled. For Thériault, life is prior to moral law. The women of this book are rebels because law and circumstance deny them life. Thériault's essential vitalism is a defiant, resentful

revolt against the ethical conception which identifies life with law and order, symbolized by the marriage bond.

In her absolute separation of life from marriage Mlle Thérèse Tardif is the feminine counterpart of Thèriault. What distinguishes this writer, over and above her rebellion, is her cynical irony. *La Vie quotidienne* is not the story of a rich, full life, but rather of a potential life, of the consciousness of a creative power in the world capable of moulding its antagonisms into a grand symphony. Hyacinthe Savage —a symbolic name—is a musician, a composer, a creative spirit. He is convinced of God's presence in himself, he speaks familiarly of God as part of himself. An orphan at birth, he lived some time in an orphanage but, in the book, he occupies an attic in the home of a stepmother, Berthe Charlier. There we have something like the "constants" of a new sort of fiction: an orphan, a motherless creature, abandoned by God the Father; a creative spirit existing on the edge of the ethical world. Cynically, all that Hyacinthe has to do to be happy is to abstain from feeling, seeing, hearing. What this creative spirit meets with in existence is the monstrous clutch of circumstance, of which, for Mlle Tardif, the octopus in Hugo's *Les Travailleurs de la mer* is the symbol, and an overarching disciplinary order, symbolized by the woman who took his mother's place. In her joyless, unvital world, Hyacinthe appears a wild, untamed thing. To escape it he goes off to Clémentine. Clémentine is joy, the fascination of the senses. To turn from Clémentine to Armande, a nurse, is to turn from joy to disgust, to the routine dullness of daily life, of which marriage is the ironic symbol. As the civilized world in which he moves and has his being is Christian, Hyacinthe's drama is a conflict between reason and the orthodox interpretation of human life. The author develops the meaning of his life out of clashes with his friend Claude, a priest. The priest is uneasy, uncertain, until Hyacinthe reveals that he has "carnal tendencies." Then the priest has a clue. He sees Hyacinthe as a composite of body and soul, one who is corrupt and needs salvation; he does not see the God in Hyacinthe. When the priest "illuminates the abyss" Hyacinthe's vital spirit rebels. "A wave of life rose in him and he did not care to restrain it. Hyacinthe cried out to nature, wanted to merge with it. There were not two men in him, but one man only, going straight to his destiny." Out of the clashes with the priest, too, Mlle Tardif creates her exquisite irony of salvation. Using, while refusing, Christian categories, she says to those who speak of temptation: "In exchange for sin Hyacinthe possesses the world." When an operation weakens

Hyacinthe the priest is sure of his conversion. The situation is a vent for the author's ironic temper. Of Hyacinthe's feelings at the moment she writes: "Temptation attacked his senses, mind, reason even; in his soul the great sadness of this unemployed portion of his being: the part of corruption and disintegration. Doubt preceding doubt, the regret of faults not committed." To Hyacinthe, salvation of the soul does not mean salvation from sin; it means getting down to his *ballade*; it means creating a symphony out of the moment of anguish. The vulgar conception of "eternal life" has here a different resonance. "Hyacinthe was not born to die but to live, to live eternally and in all the ramifications of his being. He doubts neither God nor the communion of saints, but the rites refashioned for him by his stepmother and transformed into fetichism." The absolute demand God makes of him is to travel the way of daily life to the end of saving his soul. He would marry Armande, would place her at his side in the routine life of the household, in the anarchy of daily life, but, in advance, he escaped from this *foyer* of discipline. He would allow Armande full liberty within the horizon of the family; to himself he reserved full liberty of time and action. He had his road to travel, which was not Armande's; a long road which God watched over. It is the artist's road; the road of the creative, godlike spirit, Christ's road, not the sinner's road. "It is not from the depths of the abyss that he moans; rather is he happy that God has placed him on the road of brambles and thorns, that for Him he has undertaken this road." And on this road the curve of Hyacinthe's salvation follows the Christian paradox: "He loses himself. He will be saved." That is Mlle Tardif's conception of a wedded and consecrated life. Unlike other of her compatriots—André Giroux, Robert Elie, André Langevin—who are preoccupied with the problems of purity and perfection, Mlle Tardif refuses the temptation of death, trancends tragedy, and ennobles the artist by her intuition of a divine mystery.

Two novels which I have reserved for the end of this survey are striking in the very dissimilarity of the art with which they take us up the mystic way to purity and perfection. Léo-Paul Desrosiers first revealed the Franciscan source of his mysticism of nature in *Sources.* His new novel, *L'Ampoule d'or,* is charged with the supernatural wisdom of the Preacher: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . . or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken." It is the autobiography of a consecrated school-teacher. Julienne, though raised in the odour of piety, is a wild adolescent. She roves the region of Mont-Joli in that Gaspé to which Breton cod fishers have been coming for centuries. One day she meets Silvère, a Breton

boy, who speaks of his childhood, of the hardships of fishing on the Grand Banks. To Julienne, Silvère is the unexplored land of her ancestors; she wants nothing so much as to be alone with him. Her father, who reminds her that Silvère is a bird of passage, becomes for her the agent of frustration, fate. Her passion grows all the stronger. Together Silvère and Julienne go off in a boat which becomes broken in a storm on the rocks of Bonaventure Island, forcing them to spend a night half-submerged in a cave. They owe their salvation to La Maussade, a simple peasant soul, who had watched the boat and got some fishermen to go to their rescue. Angered by her disobedience, the father says: "Julienne will enter this house no more." So Julienne goes to live with La Maussade. To distract her, La Maussade takes her up to the Table-à-Rolland, a high plateau where fires are lighted at night to guide sailors. At the sight of Silvère's boat lying at anchor Julienne attempts to throw herself over the precipice but La Maussade prevents her. The priest, a Recollet father, teaches her the Christian secret of happiness: "Fear God, and keep his commandments." Still full of anguish Julienne again climbs to the Table-à-Rolland and sees Silvère's boat, but turns away. From the cabin of a wrecked ship she takes some books bound in sheepskin: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus. They resemble the books of St. François de Sales, Father Chardon, and Father Thomas of Jesus which she had read in the Recollet's library. From now on Julienne—and the reader too, for M. Desrosiers quotes page after page of it—bathes in the lyricism of this ancient wisdom. It is a new Julienne who returns to her father's house, who climbs to the Table-à-Rolland, a Julienne no longer rebellious against God but full of a joy not known before. One day the Recollet father hands her a book he had found in a trunk. It is worn and not too clean, but it contains the poems of St. John of the Cross. These pious works, the supernatural nourishment of Franciscan piety, reveal to Julienne her vocation: she will teach the village children.

The story of Julienne is but a fictional representation of the soul's elevation from love of human things to love of God and follows the pattern of mystical literature. First the dark night, the tempestuous night in the cave; the gift of fear and anguish, the gift of emptiness and vanity, the gift of wisdom—all lyrically experienced in the words of Solomon; the elevation into the light of God's presence, the climb to the Table-à-Rolland, with its beacon to guide seafarers of the Atlantic wilderness; the ardour of divine love which St. John of the Cross called "la llama de amor viva." On this height of land, this peak where M. Montpetit, in a vision, saw an Indian chief salute the dawn,

Julienne, a daughter of Canada, finds in the shrubs and rocks of the Gaspésian coast the sweetness of her love for the God of her childhood, as the Shulamite found hers in the juice of pomegranates. By his Franciscan wisdom M. Desrosiers has unified the history of Canada under a mystic sign.

What M. Desrosiers does lyrically, M. André Langevin does in a new way by breaking the whole being of a man and creating a drama of the fragmented soul. In this new art, of which *Evadé de la nuit* is a specimen, the protagonist is not a hero in the old sense of the word; the characters are not so much men and women as symbolic figures. Actually they are aspects of personality; they argue rather than converse; dialectic replaces dialogue. The action is nothing to speak of—the soul is acting; there is little description; there is realism, sordid, revolting, hopeless perhaps, because the soul is enveloped in the darkness of the senses. Obviously the genre is inclining to metaphysics, and we might call it metaphysical or dialectical romance. It is an art which proceeds by negation, by finding death in life and life in death. Like that of St. Theresa or St. John of the Cross it consists in finding God by the recognition of his absence: fate, nothingness, evil. The hero is an orphan, forsaken by his father and, like Christ, he cries: "Why hast thou forsaken me?" It employs mystic symbols of man's nothingness: abyss, dark night, and the arduous ascent of the mountain to his impossible perfection. We must understand something of this art before we can appreciate the sombre depths as well as the immaculate purity of M. Langevin's *Evadé de la nuit,* a remarkably powerful work for a young man of twenty-four.

The story is slight, yet the book is very dense. Jean Cherteffe, raised in an orphanage, is haunted by the spectre of death. At the beginning he spends a night in the presence of a dead man, his father. Marcel, Jean's brother who is away fighting, has said of him: "Our father does not exist. He is a miserable drunkard who has dropped his identity somewhere." From his father Jean inherited his predestined nature, "not to love life." To flee from himself, to escape acute suffering, he resorts to alcohol. In a tavern he meets Roger Benoît, a man of thirty or so, a drunkard, whom alcohol "innoculated . . . against the noxious exhalations of sensibility." Benoît is a poet in process of decay. Ten years before he appeared to be a Titan, a Prometheus; now "he no longer knew the flesh and blood man who inhabited him." After alcohol, Benoît tries strychnine, then gas, and passes into the realm of death where he belongs. "Gas glues you better to the ground than disgust." For months Jean tries to drown his memory in hard work

for a review: translating by day, proof-reading in the evening. But his dreams are haunted by the nightmare of the night he spent in the presence of his father's corpse. The alcohol he drinks to extinguish his memory endows him with supernatural lucidity. The bitter consciousness of impotency was the gift Jean received in the dark night of his soul. He left the review, rented a room in an unknown house, took cover, as it were, created a void about himself to protect himself from the hostile world. He now meets Micheline, the daughter of Judge Giraud, a man who dedicated his life to the business of cleansing public morals. Micheline sought to escape her father's rigorism, preferring to spend herself in the service of sick and fallen humanity. In a scene between father and daughter we learn the secret of their relationship. The mother had been an alcoholic who had died when Micheline was born; it was God's chastisement, Judge Giraud said. "Your mother was a wretch, a sinner, possessed. . . . I must admit that I am terrified to find your mother in you." Despite the Judge's warnings Jean and Micheline unite their destinies. On her father's death, Micheline finds herself disinherited. She and Jean rent a cabin in the mountains. The ascent is arduous, for Micheline is expecting a baby. Winter comes, snow covers the land, the cold makes them shiver. Then Micheline has to be taken to hospital. She knows she is going to die. For a long time Jean watches the snow fall,

> filled with ecstasy which transcended life, cleansed it, gave it a serene joy which he accepted without question because, for the first time, it more than satisfied his bitter thirst. . . . He would not ask if it would last. The blows of fate could no longer reach him. He would walk among men unknown of them, lifted up by happiness and none would be able to touch him. . . . What had they to interpose between each other, now that all was finished, now that Micheline was immeasurably purified and could neither give nor receive? She was his. He would keep her. . . . Micheline dwelt in him, united as she had wished to be. She occupied him wholly. So intimately bound that he had nothing more to tell her, for she knew all.

He has difficulty in finding his way up the mountain, the snow is up to his knees, the wind lashes his face. He stops exhausted.

> Then he thought he was swimming in milk, at each new effort to step forward he had to break a thicker wall. He resigned himself and the milk filled his mouth and froze his veins. His limbs became heavy and he slipped. The shadows disappeared. He became luminous. Micheline's skin covered him entirely, her mouth froze his mouth, and her sweet, purifying voice called him from afar, a long way off. Sweetness killed him.

Evadé de la nuit is a novel of revolt, like Mlle Tardif's. M. Langevin's critique of civilized values is revolutionary. It turns ethical judgments

upside down. It rings with Satanic defiance: "Evil, be thou my Good." Moral hygiene, in the person of the judge, is the black character in this scheme of things while Micheline, the fruit of sin, is tenderness, the pure relation between self and the other, the luminous spirit that leads Jean upward to the perfect union he cannot find in the moral world.

There are no original short stories this year unless we include under that title the two volumes of *Contes de Noel* by M. Louis C. O'Neil, a journalist of Sherbrooke. They are humorous inventions of a free and ingenious imagination shooting forth like fantastic flowers from one stem: the *crèche* which at Christmas time represents the birth of the Infant Jesus. M. O'Neil's humour is journalistic in the best sense; his imagination puffs up every element in the drama with local matter until it appears a prodigious piece of fun causing contagious laughter. On December 24 the Metropolitan Opera is rehearsing *Tristan and Isolde* under the direction of Arturo Toscanini. Sir Thomas Beecham is bending over a score of *The Magic Flute*. Melchior, Helen Jepson, Gladys Swarthout, Lily Pons, all the stars are there when a telegram arrives asking if they would give a concert that night at the Bethlehem *crèche*. Each begins singing carols in his native tongue and finally the powerful chorale in which all nations unite: *Venite adoremus Dominum*. There is a "little Canada" in the heavens, a small but gradually increasing group surrounding Marguerite Bourgeoys who is making maple syrup, and one of the most amusing stories pictures Marguerite with others of the heavenly host descending upon Sherbrooke, forming a procession, and passing into St. Michael's cathedral singing the *Magnificat*.

Mlle Carmen Roy collected most of her *Contes populaires gaspésiens* from the lips of a Gaspé fisherman named Léon Collins. They are "marvellous tales" which fishermen out of St. Malo brought over from the old country. The prose pieces in M. Ernest Beatrix's two collections, *Chez les sauvages* and *Des histoires,* more like anecdotes than stories, are Indian tales and legends he has garnered from Canadian authors. This kind of literature properly belongs to that department of folklore which concerns itself with the oral traditions of a region. Mlle Roy works in collaboration with the National Museum and the department of folklore at Laval University. It is a fitting moment to mention a recent work published in the series "Les Archives de Folklore" under the direction of M. Luc Lacourcière, professor of folklore at Laval. Sister Marie-Ursule's *Civilisation traditionnelle des Lavalois* is a solid piece of research work on the folklore of Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval, a

parish on the Montmorency River north of Quebec. Four hundred pages in length, it studies the manners and customs of the people under the headings of "Festivals and Ceremonies," "Stages of Life," "Domestic Industries"; their oral traditions in proverbs, legends, stories of various kinds; their popular songs. Numerous photographs, sketches, and melodies illustrate the text. Sister Marie-Ursule is a student from Minnesota; but her father was born in this parish and this fact no doubt gave her zest and patience to amass all the pieces of information which have gone into this complete picture of the manners and traditions of a parish.

III

Among the poets three women have that peculiar vision which sees a sacramental act in every daily task. Mme François Gaudet-Smet's *Affaire de famille,* a mixture of prose and poetry, introduces us to the habitant's home. The poet has a consolation for every occasion; for the expectant mother, the consolation of "Notre-Dame de l'Attente." Again in Mme Jeanne L'Archevêque-Duguay's collection *Dans mon jardin* we meet the habitant wife and mother. She is baking bread:

> Avant que le soleil brûle dans la cour
> de votre petite maison, vous pétrissez
> la pâte qui donnera le pain de l'époux.
>
> Déjà les charbons crépitent dans le four
> la flamme finira l'œuvre de vos mains,
> l'odeur du pain parfumera votre foyer.
>
> Quel amour vous mettez à remplir
> ce devoir quotidien de l'épouse:
> donner la nourriture à sa maison.
>
> Toutes les nourritures, bonne Vierge;
> le pain, aux lèvres humaines
> et la pâture des âmes immortelles.

When she sits she spins or weaves. In her garden she gathers "mystic sheaves." Mme Duguay looks over the Duguay property; she is grateful for the gift of the land, she blesses it. It is an altar and she, the priest with calloused hands, will make an offering of the sheaves to the Master.

> Comme elle a souffert, ma terre!
> Voyez sa chair déchirée par la charrue brutale; souffrance
> nécessaire des êtres qui donnent vie.
> Vous l'avez subie, ô Maître, c'est bien juste que je souffre de
> la douleur de cette amie, ma terre!
> Bonne, douce, féconde!

Voyez comme elle est riche, ma terre!
Elle coule entre mes doigts noire, humide, légère. Je prends plaisir à la palper et si je vous trouve bon, Maître!
Vous me l'avez donnée si grande! Jusqu'aux bois!
Dire que je ne méritais rien. . .
Permettez qu'en votre Nom, je la bénisse.
. . . . . .

Si tu le veux bien, ma terre!
Nous Le servirons à deux, le Maître, quand sonnera l'heure de ta fécondité. Tu seras l'autel et moi, le prêtre.
Avec mes mains calleuses, je ferai l'offrande: A Vous, Immolé de l'Hostie, ces blés pressés, montant vers le soleil.
La fatigue du serviteur, ses pas plus lourds.

The latest and best of Ruth Lafleur-Hétu's *contes* or bouquets of liturgical lyrics, *Le Conte de la compassion*, has the charm we associate with Pre-Raphaelite art. Her religious thirst has led her to seven thirteenth-century Florentine saints, noble souls who turned their backs on worldly pomp and retired to caves in the hills where each, in the ardour of his adoration, is transfigured by living again an episode in the Virgin's life. Ruth Lafleur-Hétu's imagination, like that of medieval religious artists, weaves these episodes into verbal tapestries. Here is her picture of the profound disturbance caused in Pharaoh's kingdom by the presence of Joseph and Mary:

C'est alors qu'Amédée entendit un bruit sourd par toute l'Egypte:
Les Momies de la Vallée des Rois et des Reines se retournèrent dans leurs Sarcophages aux Sept Enveloppes lamées d'or, entrechoquant leurs bracelets à la tête d'Aspic.
Tous les brûle-encens des Temples éteignirent leur brasier,
Et la Pharaon-Roi de cette nuit-là, ne pouvant dormir dans son lit incrusté de bleu-lazuli, fit monter ses Astrologues
Dans leur Tour,
Pour savoir de quelle perturbation souffraient les Astres, tant leur clarté était aveuglante!

Georges Larouche is the Saguenay lawyer-poet whose *La Voie Saguenayenne* struck a new note in 1950. In a preface to a new collection of poems, *Elans d'Amour,* M. Marcel Lambert speaks of a "Canadian way of poetry, or more exactly of Canadian poetic types" and of M. Larouche he says: "This poet with a nordic soul has been nourished emotionally on Saguenay nature. The poetic superabundance which tortures his inner being is a typically Canadian superabundance. This poet, who has passionately cultivated Canadian poetic essences, makes no show of poetry. His work is a work of clearing the land, blazing a trail through the northern forests of poetry." That

is fine writing and perhaps generally true of M. Larouche's genius; but I wonder where the northern forests are now. True, in the last throbs of these "élans d'amour" there are murmurs of "un drapeau Canadien" and "mes bouquins Saguenayens"; but the book is charged with a lover's complaints and spiced with a wit which may be nordic. The lover is ardent, no doubt, but he is playing the game of love. The "thou" of the poems is a ravishing rose; the poet is dazzled by her "physiognomy." She causes pain, torments, transports, delirium—all the old distress of romantic lovers. It is in her eyes that he drinks the philtre of love. Perhaps such rhyming words as "personnalité," "ventilation," "génération," "imagination," "déception," give the poetry a new cast. There is a familiarity in this speech that we recognize as the speech of today, but the distinctive note is the witty combination of romantic impulse and reflection:

> Tu es un ange du ciel,
> malgré ton manque d'ailes. . .
> Hélas! ces tourments se prolongent
> et mon cœur s'humecte comme une éponge. . .

For this poet's fancy no hyperbole is outrageous. An odd comparison shocks us:

> Heureux celui qui te possède,
> tu n'es pas un ordinaire bipède . . .

One poem, by its witty word-play, shows us a creative way of using Musset:

> Je lisais lentement dans une nuit
> où se trouvent des peines et des ennuis;
> et, tout à coup, arriva, à pas fortuits,
> celle qui m'a toujours ravi.
> Je lisais lentement la Nuit d'Octobre,
> et, avant de finir, je fus chargé d'opprobes:
> elle est venue aux bras d'un autre
> et elle fut hélas avec l'autre mon hôte.

There are no deep secrets in Normand Robidoux's *Confidences.* They reveal simple sentiments: the poet's evanescent dream, the beauty of a young bosom, the sadness of forsaken girls; but despair is a song rather than a tragedy. The poems of perfumed memory fade rather than shine by comparison with the sentiments and phrases of "les poètes maudits."

The poet of *Objets trouvés,* Sylvain Garneau, is a young man of twenty. To voice the sadness of his disillusion he has created a kingdom of castles still redolent of the vanished splendour of his childhood dreams. There are fountains, lakes, cascades, birds, poppies, butterflies; there are myrtle hedges; but the windows are broken, the lordly gaiety

has gone. No hero comes to liberate the princess in the tower; the queen is asleep; the king is an idle fellow who drinks and sleeps and pays no heed to his crazy jester, his throne is mouldering under cobwebs. Everything in the park is asleep or dead: the cats, the ducks, the poet in the timothy. The perfume of myrtle still lingers and a nostalgia for Provençal song, old ports, and oriental bazaars, a ghostly air of ennui.

> Souvent son grand château s'animait de rubans,
> De guirlandes de fleurs et de lampes chinoises;
> Le jardin se couvrait de tables et de bancs.
> Le festin attirait toutes les villageoises.
> Et le bon vin coulait, coulait à pleins tonneaux.
> Les enfants piétinaient les fleurs, à perdre haleine.
> Et pendant quatre nuits, sous le feu des fanaux,
> On voyait scintiller mille coupes trop pleines.
> Et pendant quatre jours, nous n'avions qu'une loi:
> Danser, danser toujours, danser la farandole.
>
> —Et toujours, je rêvais a la fille du roi,
> Mais je ne savais pas que la pauvre était folle.

Eloi de Grandmont's *Premiers secrets* are the secrets of an imagist. With this poet, feelings naturally take the form of images and colours so that he often gives the impression of living in two dimensions at once.

> L'hiver viendra laver la terre.
> Et, sur les meubles du printemps,
> On posera, la main légère,
> Des pots de fleurs dans tous les champs.

With this gift he creates a picture postcard sort of art. Here are images taken from "Cartes postales" and other poems:

> Le soleil est une pluie
> De cristal fondu.
>
> L'étoile filante
> Fait un bruit qui ressemble
> A la fumée de cigarette.
>
> La joie est rouge devant nous,
> Comme une pomme, et difficile
> A saisir de la main . . .
>
> L'home est replié, coincé
> Dans sa dure écorce d'orange.

Grandmont's technique makes the feeling taut, resonant, as he writes of the loneliness, melancholy, fear, the cold death of childhood in a northern land.

> C'est fait: j'ai dit adieu
> Aux diamants qui incendient
> Les déserts de neige
> Et aux prisonniers de ces déserts.

He speaks of "the weight of families." In his home,

> La maison sent le café.
> L'ombre écarlate du père
> Caché sous le papier peint
> Nous regarde
> Avoir peur.

A forest at night is an underground which man enters to die, breathing the perfume of oaks, enveloped in a play of stars and young girls' glances. This poet's melancholy is that painted, hollow gaiety we know by the name of Harlequin.

François Hertel published two collections of poems this year: *Mes Naufrages* and *Jeux de mer et de soleil,* twelve poems in all. Though at present resident in Paris, he is not unmindful of his homeland.

> Les fleuves de chez moi, dans leur grandeur sauvage,
> Ne m'ont guère inspiré que des vers opulents.
> Cette Seine saumâtre où je rôde à la nage
> Emeut tous mes malheurs au gré des gestes lents.

Because his being is anguish, his soul split, Hertel's poetic art is characteristically modern. On the one hand there is the body and on the other the intellect. The delights to which his body invites him and which his consciousness of sin forbids originate two spiritual adventures: metaphysical rebellion, which is new, an adventure in angry cursing of the whole race of men and women; a plunge into a void, a nothingness, the absence of intellect. The first adventure is "not for human readers"; it is an outburst of Baudelairean spleen. "Maudit soit donc le mâle et sa truie venimeuse!" He curses humanity "so that God may not be alone in repenting the birth of man." On his second adventure he creates his special art of paradox. Remembering the romantics, he thinks of this plunge into nothingness as ecstasy, intoxication, a longing for eternity; remembering the intellect, he calls it a "clear nothingness." In the poem "Néant clair" he invokes wine, "the well-known ecstasy," blesses it for its "sweet bitterness," and "to its dear festival" he "invites magnificent and temporal eternity." The poems in *Mes Naufrages* are plunges into nothingness. They are "river" poems: "Mélancolie fluviale," "Aux rives de la Seine," "Sous les fleuves," "Le gai naufrage," "Solitude et noyade." "Sous les fleuves," while distinguished by Hertel's paradox, contains an element of spleen and the essence of Rimbaud's "Bateau ivre."

> Le long des fleuves mous, j'ai coulé sous la lame
> Verdissante des eaux. Je suis le noyé lent,
> Qui s'égoutte fort seul. Quand la rythmique rame
> Bat la mer sur mon dos, je me meurs opulent.

Je suis gai d'être mort. Ce fut un jour de pluie
Que je me donnai cours à plus de densité.
Je me sentais trop sec pour vivre cette vie,
Je rêvais d'une ondine au cadavre lacté. . .

IV

M. Félix Leclerc's *Théâtre de village* is meant for the ears of a radio audience; it employs a narrator and music records. The author's imagination attains its freedom by shuttling between a pastoral world of perfectly human acts and a mechanical, dehumanized world, the oral world of radio. The script entitled "Les Bergers" is the high-water mark of this art. Caliou is a shepherd on the mountains; he lacks nothing; he is happy. Osil, his companion, has gone down to the world of men; he has grown sombre and rebellious. Caliou thinks it is a mood which will pass, for Osil is a shepherd. But the Fairy—Amielle, spirit of the pastoral age—whispers sadly: "The age of shepherds is drawing to its close." When Osil returns he has a mysterious little box under his coat; he is accompanied by a lady in black, the sorceress Hernasse, spirit of the scientific age. "You were raised here? . . . Like an animal. You, a superior man, will leave this place to the dogs. . . . Happiness is down there. Money is down there. I will take you out of the world of the dead. To be a shepherd in an age like ours is to refuse life, it is an insult to your manliness." Hernasse leaves Osil the box, saying that if he is bored all he has to do is to turn the button and she will return. "When you have drunk all that is inside it you will know all the sciences." Curious, Osil turns the button. A languid gipsy music is heard and he, who only knows the notes of his own flute, is charmed. The music makes him forget his sheep, even the sick ones. Out of the magic box come "hot jazz," the voices of a scientist, a philosopher, a mathematician. All sorts of speeches are heard, punctuated by saxophone or organ music. The box reveals to Caliou and Osil their indigence, their humility. Throwing away their shepherd's crook and rags they go off to see the world. Caliou is swallowed up in the crowd, but Osil, who has discovered that man is a "being of darkness," returns to the hills.

While M. Leclerc is modern, fanciful, and lyrical, M. Jean Pellerin is more psychological, and inclines to medieval forms. *Le Combat des élus* was inspired by the life of a Franciscan known as the Good Father Frédéric of whom Father O. Lamontagne recently published a biography. "The life of a saint," Father Emile Legault of the Compagnons de Notre-Dame remarks, "is not precisely the natural stuff of drama. The theatre lives on conflicts. In the case of a saint, conflict does not exist: grace has already triumphed in him. The public know that, as

soon as the curtain goes up." It is conflict, however, that M. Pellerin seeks to dramatize. In this play the art of the medieval stage is used to present the same spiritual process as we found in the novels previously discussed. Its theme is the passage through a dark abyss of spiritual anguish into God's light. When Frédéric Janssoone sought admission to the Franciscan order he was warned that "the elect do not know peace, but a sword. Their life is a combat." As a preacher Frédéric was endowed with the gift of working miracles, with power to move the people. They crowded round him to hear his words, to invoke his help to cure their sickness, make their fields produce good crops. And Frédéric was troubled to note that they venerated him, the instrument, the servant, rather than the Master. Even in his cell he was tormented by visits from Satan; by the consciousness of pride and vanity. In his last struggle Vanity, in the mantle of Satan, flatters him: "You have edified the people." She wheedles him:

"Is it not the Eternal who permits me to cohabit with the children of men? I have had the honour of being the first man's adversary. I have been the happy fault. From the origin of the world, I was in the spirit of Adam; I have visited the greatest minds of history, the greatest artists, the greatest saints. I have known the Bishop of Hippo and the Bishop of Meaux. I was in the grotto of Peter the Hermit and in Jerome's. I have visited Anthony's desert and John Chrysostom's lips. As you see, I am a companion worthy of you."

As Vanity goes on speaking the shadows grow deeper until Frédéric cries: "Deliver me from this other self which is poisoning my soul." He is standing on the edge of an abyss, giddy, and prays for strength to look into it without disgust. Satan, who formulates all his horrid thoughts, remarks: "I must play my rôle. I must torture this monk, trouble him with my sophistry, so that he may have a proof that he is a saint." He mocks him: "A man who rebels against human nature . . . a man who lives like a statue, on a pedestal, and intoxicates himself with the odour of his virtues; is there anything more ridiculous? It's stupid, monstrous. . . . A monster who has looked for the moon and found the abyss." And the weary Frédéric cries to God: "Give me back my strength, quiet my nerves. Return, O Lord, snatch me from the hands of my enemies." Monks are heard reciting the "De Profundis." Satan retires in a rage. "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord," Frédéric recites as he rises, picks us his breviary and pulls his hood over his head.

V

M. Séraphin Marion's new book, *Origines littéraires du Canada français,* contains four essays on nineteenth-century literature: "Notre

première tragédie," "Nos trois premiers romans," "Notre premier recueil de vers," "Notre poète national." Although there is no note to indicate the fact, these four essays have already appeared in the volumes of his *Les Lettres canadiennes d'autrefois*. By grouping them under this new title M. Marion wanted, perhaps, to correct the impression created by those critics who, in the words of Clément Marchand, "make Canadian literature begin with the publication of the novels of Gabrielle Roy, Germaine Guèvremont, or Ringuet." The note appended to the essay on Crémazie, "our national poet," is, in the light of the facts, amusing. It reads: "Those who would care to obtain more ample information on the qualities and defects of Crémazie might profitably consult volume V of *Les Lettres canadiennes d'autrefois*." This volume is devoted to Crémazie; but as the work is 200 pages long M. Marion has here had to curtail it. Consulting the Crémazie volume I find that whole chapters and many pages of other chapters are deleted. Curious to understand the meaning of this ruthless purging of the earlier text I re-read the deleted passages and found that M. Marion has removed the "nationalism" and the romantic glamour from Crémazie's poetic physiognomy. Resisting the fatal attraction of anecdote and "laying hold on that which is eternal," the result is a more sober work inclining towards purer criticism.

There is a type of mind, reflective, critical, that expresses itself in short sentences which may be called "thoughts" or "maxims." M. Louis-Philippe Robidoux, a journalist by profession, called his first volume of reflections "thoughts"; he calls his new collection *Lueurs*. These flashes are turned on literature and writers. If there is a governing principle in his art it is to light up the hollow pretensions and reduce the dignity of second-rate writers, imitators, plagiarists, sycophants, by contrasting them with competent or great writers. The virtue M. Robidoux exalts is the classical virtue of reason. He leans to Boileau; he is on the side of the lapidary phrase; he loves polish; he is solicitous about "thought" and sceptical of "success." His reflections are sometimes witty:

> Quand on pense que certains écrivains sont arrivés, on n'en revient pas.
> En littérature, si tu ne peux être Montaigne, sois colline. . .
> Dieu nous garde des romans de la jeune dégénération!

At times they are harsh:

> Si le style est l'homme, nous avons, en ce pays, une surabondance de bonnes femmes.

But in the main they touch the point:

Je ne lis jamais une autobiographie sans penser aux belles et nobles vies qui ne se racontent pas.

Shakespeare n'a jamais crié à la radio, mais il parle encore à l'esprit et au cœur de bien du monde.

VI

The second volume of Canon Groulx's *Histoire du Canada français* completes his story of Canada under French rule. Two other volumes will be devoted to Canada under British rule. This second volume covers less than fifty years, from 1713 to 1760. It is divided into two "periods"; "The Road to Peace" and "Towards Catastrophe." In the first he discusses political deficiencies and financial difficulties, in France and in Canada, and deals with English and French expansion in North America. Then he draws a picture of various "accomplishments"; in "demography," by which he means populating the country; in colonizing or clearing the land and establishing settlements; in industry, commerce, education, and social life. Then, turning to the people, he defines the psychology of "human types." In the second period he describes the sufferings of the last years of the French régime and "the melancholy of the end." It is an old story, perhaps, but there is something new. We notice it in the two divisions, "accomplishments" and "human types." In this latter conception we feel the spirit of Léon Gérin. The "habitant," says M. Groulx, is not a "peasant." He is a man who possesses a domain or habitation in a colony, and this possession "is a distinctive trait which elevates him above the peasant." He is comfortably off; he has dignity, pride, a spirit of independence; he is a strong personality, attached to his land, difficult to govern. The colonial aristocrat may be noble, *seigneur,* military officer, officer of justice, or administrative officer. He, says M. Groulx, is for ever complaining about his poverty. "Illustrious wretches," he calls these aristocrats, "beggars in silk stockings." Nevertheless he finds grandeur in this eighteenth-century society: in its cult of the King's service, in its good breeding, its taste. "And what conversation! What thrilling subjects it could provide in the *salons* of those days, among men who had all lived through extraordinary adventures. Service in France, service in Canada, in Louisiana, Illinois, around the Great Lakes, ranging the bush, comings and goings which identified them with the Indian wars, the discovery of the west, the possession of Ohio, the war of 1744, the expeditions in Acadia, to Ile Royale and elsewhere." The synthetic genius of M. Groulx leads him to define "the Canadian" as a composite of the human types he has described. "Vigorous, morally sound, rooted in his parcel of land, the Canadian is also the incorrigible nomad, ready for any adventure, even the

adventure of the cross." He has a sense of his own individuality in the great French family. In France he is not at home. At war he prefers to be commanded by a Canadian. M. Groulx is an historian who digests facts so that they become truths of the heart and imagination. He weaves syntheses, loads his prose with rhetorical questions. He wheedles us; he constantly speaks of "this little people," but to make us admire all the more their great achievements, their dignity, their polite manners, their "superiority."

Turning to M. Gustave Lanctot's *Réalisations françaises de Cartier à Montcalm* we enter a different atmosphere, that of the "scientific" historian. Here we encounter no imaginative syntheses, no rhetoric; but only documentary evidence, reason, logical conclusions. Where M. Groulx speaks of "accomplishments," M. Lanctot speaks of "realizations." We have the general tone in a passage like this: "From the examination of unpublished documents several very important conclusions may be deduced. First, it behoves us to rectify radically the traditional account given by Lescarbot and Champlain. . . . Secondly, we must not repeat any more that La Roche's colonists were prisoners or old offenders as writers have continually averred." We hear a sober recitation of facts by a man whose feelings are disciplined yet quick:

> Then night fell again more dense, more sombre. The next day, Montreal lowered its lily-flowered flag and Canada became British territory. A new flag then floated in the air of New France.
>
> But in the colony wrapped in mourning, from Gaspé to Detroit, nothing other than that was changed; under the grief and sadness which gripped it, the whole population of Canada that day made a vow to keep its French and Catholic soul despite everything. And that vow later generations have kept so well that today four millions of French Canadians and Acadians preserve intact, and with unwearied vigour, the traditions, the language, and the religion of ancestors on this American soil where their forbears wrote the finest chapter of French history outside France.

Besides these essays M. Lanctot has published a selective and critical bibliography which students of literature and the fine arts, as well as historians, will find very useful: *L'Œuvre de la France en Amérique du Nord*. It contains short descriptions of 465 items arranged in the following order: printed sources; history: general works; culture, literature, fine arts and folklore; social and political questions, institutions, laws, studies and problems; bibliographical guides. M. Lanctot's object is "to furnish a repertory of works and publications of every sort that will permit us to enlarge our knowledge of the contribution of France—explorations, colonization, evangelization—in the development of North America." Since French enterprise extended into many corners of the continent, he takes note of works concerning

French groups in New England, Louisiana, the Mississippi valley, and the states of the Middle West. Special works, such as monographs and biographies, he omits. For example, he omits Chapais' *Montcalm* and includes his *Talon,* because "it is not so much a biography as a history of an absolutely fundamental period."

After completing twenty-three volumes of a *Histoire de la province de Québec,* M. Robert Rumilly has brought out a *Histoire du Canada,* a work of nearly six hundred pages covering the whole drama from Cartier to M. Saint-Laurent. As M. Rumilly believes that he voices the feelings of the majority of French Canadians his word is not to be scorned. I make no pretence to have read the whole work; but since it touches on present matters, I was curious to hear what this historian had to say about experiences we have recently lived through in this country, especially in the war period. I gain the impression that there was a war in which French Canadians, a people endowed with solid good sense and the sense of a sacred mission to preserve their own civilization, a people animated by an age-old fear of "assimilation," were marshalled to fight in the cause of British imperialism and the Christian way of life by the cunning propaganda of federal leaders and their own Cardinal Villeneuve. Yet one cannot but admire the art with which M. Rumilly concentrates whole tracts of historical experience into tablet narratives which reflect the basic principles of his thought.

Fierce nationalism also breathes in another book published by M. Rumilly this year, *Les Iles de la Madeleine,* a story of the people living on the islands situated in the Gulf of St. Lawrence between Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. This remnant of dispersed Acadians, a band of poor fishermen, first struggled to wrest a living from the sea, then to possess their land, and finally to become civilized. It is a spectacle of economic "accomplishments," owing in large measure to the establishment of co-operatives.

The war still continues to provide food for reflection. In a short work entitled *Les Origines de la guerre de 1939,* M. Bernard St-Aubin studies certain matters which led up to it: the Treaty of Versailles, disunity among the conquerors, the Ruhr, Hitler, the Ethiopian war, the Spanish civil war, Munich. An exhaustive treatise on *Les Finances de guerre du Canada* by M. Jean-Pierre Martin was originally presented for the doctorate to the law faculty at Paris. Speaking of M. Martin's work, M. Henry Laufenburger, a member of the faculty, remarks: "The author clearly transcends the purely technical boundaries of the subject. . . . He presents us with a real monograph of the political, economic, and financial structure of Canada. . . . To measure the war effort of this important member of the Commonwealth, the

complexity of the federal system had to be explained. . . . To appreciate Canada's financial contribution, we must know the psychology of its people. They borrow from the English their high conception of taxation as a national duty. By accepting financial discipline, the Canadians limit inflation and safeguard the substance of money."

One branch of history that flourishes in Canada is "little history." "Where, precisely, is my ancestor's estate and who is the present owner?" That is the question, says M. Léon Roy, one often hears in the Quebec Archives. M. Roy, who is following in the footsteps of his father, the well-known archivist M. Pierre-Georges Roy, has, with infinite pains, compiled a work which provides answers to such questions. With materials drawn from records kept in registry offices M. Roy has written in *Les Terres de la Grande-Anse des Aulnaies et du Port-Joly* a history of the properties abutting the river St. Lawrence between the River Ouelle and Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies and the families of the successive owners. It is a formidable piece of research provided with maps, bibliographical notes, and index. In a prefatory letter M. Pierre-Georges Roy draws our attention to the word *terre*. "*Terre* is a familiar expression we have to denote the estate or property of a *habitant*. . . . Even in France, a country of precise and appropriate definitions, the word is not found. The expression is typically Canadian and I hope it will be for a long time yet." He also feels that a work of this kind will inspire "a love of the parental home, the ancestral estate" and do much to check the "desertion" from the country to the "deceptive life" of the city.

In a sense a history of a religious institution is a "family" history. Brother Antoine Bernard's *Les Clercs de Saint-Viateur au Canada,* a work in two immense volumes, is more than a history of the Institute of which he is a member. Many of the interesting, even vital things develop out of his method of linking this family history with the general history of the province in which the Institute labours and evolves. One influences the other. These teaching brothers have an original device: "Discipline—and education in general—is before everything a work of affection. If your pupils fear you they will obey you, but their obedience may only be in their acts. If they respect you, if they love you, their submission will be in their hearts, your action on them will be effective. . . . *Have them love you.*" Their relations with their pupils do not end with the last day of school. They see to it that the students become members of youth organizations; they form old-boy associations, arrange Sunday evening parties—all means of providing honest fun and keeping boys in the love and practice of the faith. Among the influences of time and place which acted on the Institute

about 1900 M. Bernard speaks at length of the Ecole Littéraire de Montréal and the Société du Parler français: "our teaching of French was animated by a new spirit based on a firmer national faith, a more informed artistic sense." Religion was bound up with patriotism. Adjutor Rivard preached to the students of the Institute a "true French-Canadian ideal, . . . quite different from American materialism and British imperialism." And the chief of the Viatorians, Father Ducharme, "placed under the eyes of his troop a national ideal, a dual sentiment, religious and patriotic." It was under the direct influence of religious educators that such organizations as the Catholic Association of Canadian Youth came into being.

The Viatorians have three principal establishments: two classical colleges, at Joliette and Rigaud, and a school for the deaf and dumb in Montreal. Brother Gustave Lamarche's *Le Collège sur la colline* is the story of the Collège Bourget at Rigaud. M. Lamarche gives us a definition:

> A *collège* is something very different from a school or a university. . . . A school teaches the masses who constitute the lower members of the nation. A *collège* teaches the *élite*, the head of the nation. A university simply provides the *élite* with the practical means of serving the masses, and in this sense a *collège* has the better of a university; it is the appropriate place for a pure and liberal education. . . . It is the *collège* that confers a humanist disposition on a man, that is, opens his mind, gives him that inclination of the heart by which a man is made man to his depths, conditioned to receive the divine. . . . Understood according to these truths, a *collège* is a school of the sanctuary, established on a high place. It gives the nation its priests.

Founded in 1850, Bourget has expanded in every sense. It has also adapted its curricula to changing needs. Situated on the border between Quebec and Ontario, it has always offered a business course in English. *Bonne entente* is one of its precious traditions.

With all these historical methods before us it would be interesting to work out a Canadian historiography. Father Benoît Lacroix's book, *L'Histoire dans l'antiquité*, might serve as a model in this field. How did the ancients understand history and historical method? this young Dominican scholar, of the Medieval Institute of Montreal, asked himself. In addressing his work to "the young historians of America" he may have intended to inform them of "the spirit of ancient historiography," yet the work itself exemplifies a method. The first 200 pages consist of extracts from Greek and Latin authors with French translations opposite. The next 45 pages contain a study of "the spirit of ancient historiography." Then follows an index. If the scientific method is animated by fidelity to documentary evidence, if it consists in a

weighing of evidence to the end of understanding it, then M. Lacroix's work is exemplary historical science. Yet we know, from his other studies—for example, "L'Humanisme des historiens du moyen âge" (*Culture,* septembre 1951); *Pourquoi aimer le moyen âge* (L'Œuvre des Tracts, 1950)—that, medievalist though he be, M. Lacroix is anxious to find time-honoured wisdom equally valid today as yesterday and at the dawn of history. And this indicates the role he seems called on to play in creating a certain disposition of historical thought in this country. It is from the texts of Herodotus, Lucian, Cicero, Seneca, Tacitus, etc. that M. Lacroix draws his conclusions. History as "an autonomous discipline is a relatively modern fact." Historians were public men before they were writers, and it came to be an accepted principle that "those who had not taken a direct part in public life could not arouse deep emotions in the souls of readers." For the ancients, history was useful. From it the grammarian, rhetorician, orator, drew illustrative matter. In it statesmen might learn wisdom and prudence. With regard to the composition of "written" history, it was felt that facts, as such, might be dull; the historian was led to interpret them, to pass judgment, to convey a message. When, in difficulties, he questioned the causes of facts, the Greek had no alternative but to admit the intervention of the gods and chance. As a consequence he had to resign himself to fate. "The basic thought of most of the pagan historiographers," M. Lacroix concludes, "is: We do not make our destiny. We submit to our fate." To sum the matter up, the ideal historian is a man of action, preferably a military man, who has lived through the important events he relates; a man also of fearless and independent mind, a mind like "a pure mirror." This Greek ideal passed to the Middle Ages where it was adapted to Christianity. Using the same method, but different texts, the historians of the Middle Ages, M. Lacroix points out in one of the other studies mentioned, "conceived the history of humanity as essentially a unity" commencing with the creation of the first man and progressing towards the resurrection of the last man at the end of time. In short, they saw in history "a providential plan of salvation."

Moving in the present process of history and with a body of traditional principles—Aristotle, St. Thomas, Vitoria, Suarez—the religious philosopher Father Robert Bernier sees the unity of a political order as strictly universal and absolutely final. "Historical events," he says in his *L'Autorité politique internationale,* "have led us to discuss international political authority as a superstructure added to the political order." The word "international" offends him; "it indicates that National State and political order are habitually identified." He de-

stroys this identification by replacing the word "international" by the word "universal." "As humanity develops, all human values tend to interpenetrate each other. The historical unity which is revealed today is deeper and more essential than the unities in given areas of human life. It has to do with the very unity of human nature. There is no human good which is not a good for every man and which does not bind together the whole of humanity. The violation of any human right whatsoever threatens my rights." What Father Bernier seeks to establish is "obligations of conscience founded on nature."

VII

Father Jean Bousquet's *Lacordaire* is a biography of one of the shining lights of his own order, a man he describes as "the most eloquent man of his century, perhaps of all the centuries; the orator who for fifteen years held France under the magic of his incomparable word." Lacordaire appeared in France at a moment when religious faith was at a low ebb as a consequence of the Revolution. He himself lost faith; but at the age of twenty he grasped the truth which Chateaubriand recorded on the last pages of his *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*: "The Christian idea is the future of the world." Lacordaire braved official persecution and the anti-clerical press by wearing the Dominican habit. In 1844 he installed himself with three of his young religious in the first regular Dominican convent in France, Notre-Dame de Chalais, near Grenoble, where he re-established monastic observances in all their ancient rigour.

"Dog sled apostles" are missionaries in northern latitudes. The most fascinating book on missionary life among the Eskimos is Father Roger Buliard's *Inuk*; but since the author is a Frenchman we can do no more than mention this work of rare literary power. Father Antonio Dragon's *Enseveli dans les neiges* is the story of Father Jules Jetté, son of a lieutenant-governor of Quebec. On finishing his schooling, in Quebec and in France, he spent thirty years among the Indians in Alaska. In France he found "more inner spirit, more truly supernatural life than anywhere else." There he learned the essential lessons: to change himself according to the environment, human and climatic; to give up prejudices, cherished ideas, to detach his heart from everything that was not God. When he went to Alaska, he applied these Ignatian principles, became an Alaskan, lived as Indians live, spoke their language, and, as English was the official language, learned to think in English. His method was everywhere the same: to understand the Indians and love them. Savages, he says, are feeling creatures, not reasonable creatures. An athlete of God, he existed on a diet of

potatoes, bannocks, and dried fish, which he tore apart and ate in Indian fashion, and toughened his skin by morning dips in Behring Sea. "The practice of heroic virtues," he wrote, "is more than one's health. The more we share our Lord's sufferings, the greater share shall we have of His glory."

A second book of this type, *J'étais routier en terre stérile,* is more or less autobiographical. Father Eugène Nadeau composed it by arranging subject-matter he found in Father Henri-Paul Dionne's letters to his family. In 1933 Father Dionne sailed for Chesterfield Inlet and Southampton Island, the "sterile land" in northern Hudson Bay, in the waters of which he was destined to disappear sixteen years later. As for Father Jetté, his difficulties were not merely linguistic; he had to become an Eskimo, interest himself in all the activities of their nomadic life; he had to travel by dog sled, build igloos, eat raw seal and frozen cariboo meat. Tea was his principal stimulant. Two things stand out in these letters: first the heroism, walrus hunting and lonely trips across a vast mission field often in blizzards at 50 below zero; and, particularly, descriptions of Eskimo life in the igloo. Father Carmel Lacasse's *Terre d'attente* is a diary of a flying visit to mission stations on the east coast of Hudson Bay. It is the narrative of a visitor; we have poetic descriptions and discourses instead of a first-hand account of the hardships and sacrifices of a missionary's life.

M. Yvon Thériault's *L'Apostolat missionnaire en Mauricie* contains short chapters on the missionaries, first the Recollet Pacifique Duplessis, then the Jesuits, who planted the cross and evangelized the Tête-de-Boule Indians in the district of Three Rivers.

VIII

Tourists, by definition, are people who find themselves in one place one night and in another the next. They satisfy their childish thirst for the marvellous by covering the intervening distance at the most amazing speed possible. In their letters to their friends they name the hotel where they rested the night, the dishes they were served, and, if they encounter home-folks, they organize "a Canadian night." They stand before a great cathedral with their eyes glued to a guide-book and the descriptions they send home are not the works of their own hearts and minds. Many of the compilations published in book form by Holy Year tourists are of this stamp. As literature, even as propaganda, they are worthless. To turn from these to M. Marcel Cadieux's books is to turn from insubstantial things called "impressions" to something deep and satisfying.

M. Cadieux is a career diplomat. In 1950 he published a book explaining the procedure to be followed by those who intended to

compete for places in the Department of External Affairs. In two new books, *Premières armes* and *Embruns* he describes to such aspirants "the climate of the profession." He wishes "to show with the aid of concrete examples what the life of a young diplomat consists of; to describe his feelings and the kind of preoccupations which characterize his profession—a new profession in our country." Not only is the profession new, but the diplomatic service as a training ground for men of letters is a new thing with us, and it is comforting to know that we have poets and humanists as well as commercial agents to represent us in the capitals of the world. London was M. Cadieux's first experience of life abroad. He arrived there during the blitz; the terror of bombings, the hopeless groping about the city and the futile search for lodgings are the first things he describes. Then he went to Paris late in 1944, and found the city cold, hungry, anxious about its sons held as hostages. But the most interesting things in his books have nothing to do with diplomacy; they are M. Cadieux's mental reactions, the reflections of a humanist in the presence of Old World things. Like the historian Burckhardt whom he quotes, M. Cadieux is anxious to discover the "essential" man. He is fascinated by Renaissance Italy and classical Greece, by monuments instinct with "the grandeur of man." Of the ancient dwelling, housing the Churchill Club in Westminster, he writes: "The spirit of Ashburnham House, all clarity, order, took me back to the Renaissance. After sombre corridors and stones worn with time, the light and joy of the sixteenth century which had rediscovered the power of reason and the grandeur of man." The best pieces record his reflections in Venice and Athens. Houses, theatres, churches, and highways have, for M. Cadieux, the sense of "aesthetic vehicles"; they are monuments in which "architects have expressed their conception with such precision that today a visitor has but to cast his eye on their work to perceive immediately the thought that animates it." This *"façon d'être"* is not something a camera can capture. A picture postcard cannot keep it. What we retain is "the profound sense of a landscape or a basilica . . . the resonance which at a given moment the bearing, the tone of a monument stirred in us."

IX

Certain works stand apart as purely academic or doctrinal studies. Father Paul Henri Lafontaine's *L'Evêque d'ordination des religieux* and Father Pierre Ménard's *L'Exemption des séminaires de la juridiction paroissiale* are elaborate discourses on special problems of canon law. Father Albert Saint-Pierre's *La Vertu chrétienne de tempérance* is a guide to religious in their practice of "the perfection of charity by the perfection of sacrifice." In principle and in theory a religious

ought to abstain, but the author believes that "a true understanding of principle will allow him the liberty of breathing the perfume of a flower, of tasting a candy, of smoking a cigar, even if these delights are not immediately motivated by any other end than that of the sensuous pleasure they procure." To celebrate the centenary of their foundation the Sisters of Sainte Anne set a few days aside to discuss pedagogical problems such as "The Training of the Mind and the Development of the Personality," "The Teaching of Canadian History," "Literature in Relation to Life." A report of the papers and discussion is contained in the volume *Adaptation des méthodes éducationnelles*. For many years Father Arthur Guertin's notes have been used in the teaching of rhetoric at the University of Ottawa. They are now available in book form, *Rhétorique et poétique*. Rhetoric, we are told, is more than logic; it includes principles of effective reasoning, but it is essentially a science of the human heart; it is a logic which touches and persuades; it is addressed to the affections and passions. Rhetoric is a professor's commentary on the famous phrase in Racine's preface to *Bérénice*: "The principal rule is to please and to touch." By placing poetry alongside of rhetoric the editors of Father Guertin's notes have run the danger of making poetry appear a mere matter of versification and fixed forms. The second volume of M. Louis-Philippe Audet's *Le Système scolaire de la Province de Québec* deals with every aspect and problem of public education between the years 1635 and 1800.

The remaining books can be grouped under the heading of "Catholic Action," a movement which, after receiving its initial impulse from Pope Pius XI, has taken diverse and vigorous forms. Charity, for example, was the topic of discussion at the 1951 session of the Semaines Sociales, and it was studied in all its active social manifestations: charity in the home, in the school, in economic and social life, in the nation. *Le Laïcat et les missions* is a report of another branch of Catholic activity, that of laymen in the work of missions. Laymen, the report emphasizes, can play an important rôle by spreading the principles and spirit of the gospel in factories and institutions where they labour. M. Marcel Clément, with some experience of Asia as well as North America, sees the world heading for some sort of totalitarianism. "Amoral liberalism and atheistic communism," he maintains in his *Introduction à la doctrine sociale catholique*, "are both destined to failure." "One experience," he says, "remains to be tried: that to which Pope Pius XI, in an unforgettable encyclical, invited the universe in affirming the royal rights of Christ over the world." The same author's *Le Grand Retour* is a discourse on "con-

temporary unrest" and an occasion for calling men out of their philosophical and doctrinal errors, liberalism and communism, back to God. The thought of the economist, humanist, politician, and theologian must meet. Paradoxical as it may appear, "the science of prices and markets, through the science of man, leads to the science of God." Father Emile Bouvier's study of the relations between employers and workers, *Patrons et ouvriers,* ends on the same note: "The doctrine of the Church and it alone provides the answers to all the distressing problems raised." The Abbé J.-B. Gingras' *Figures de sociologie catholique* contains twelve short sketches—all too short—of Catholic social thinkers from the earliest, Alban de Villeneuve-Bargemont, to Frédéric Leplay, Albert de Mun, and Léon Harmel. Again the Catholic social doctrine appears as a solution of all problems. In M. Harmel's conviction: "Seek first and in all things spiritual interests; material advantages will be added unto you," M. Gingras finds "a magnificent illustration of Catholic social doctrine." M. Paul Legendre concludes his study of the radio as a social power, *La Radio, puissance sociale,* with reflections on the possibilities it offers as an "instrument for training our conscience." "Whenever possible," says M. Legendre, "we ought to breathe into our programmes a 'spirit' which bears witness of a healthy and whole conception of man and of life. . . . Because it can help listeners to 'feel right' and to 'think right' the radio is a purveyor of humanism. And this humanism must be Christian."

Two new reviews appeared in 1951. *La Nouvelle Revue canadienne* is a bi-monthly directed by Pierre Daviault assisted by an editorial board composed of René Garneau, Jean-Pierre Houlé, Guy Sylvestre, and Roger Duhamel. Judging by the excellent quality of the articles in the first numbers this review promises to have an important place in the intellectual life of this country. The founders have but one ambition: to produce a good literary review. To this end they refuse to confine their vision within the horizons of a "nationalist" or "regionalist" conception of literature. M. Garneau's word is eloquent in this regard. He reproaches the historians of Canadian literature for failing to see "that our new situation in the general current of ideas has rendered obsolete, at any rate incomplete, this concept of a Canadian literature exclusively centred upon the national and the religious. A more largely human inspiration must animate our writers and does in fact animate the best of them." *Arts et pensée,* another bi-monthly, is devoted to the work of Canadian artists. It has a dual purpose: to inform and to instruct. It gives photographic reports, accounts of exhibitions, monographs of artists, interviews with collectors and curators; it studies the movements of thought and social life corre-

sponding to the various forms of present-day art. The founders are animated by a will to resist "the invasion of ugliness and an audacious zeal to disseminate beauty."

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VII. NEW-CANADIAN LETTERS — WATSON KIRKCONNELL

Primacy in poetry for the year rests between the Jews and the Ukrainians. In terms of extent, the Jewish-Canadians are easily first, with the ponderous *Jewish Book* by the eminent Montreal Zionist poet, J. I. Segal—thoughtful, polished, with an extensive background of life and experience—and Josef Rogel's *Auschwitz*, poems of a burning intensity, based on the appalling Jewish experience of one of Hitler's most notorious concentration camps, devoted to their extermination. The same sort of racial tragedy lies behind Ivan Ukrayinets' three-act verse drama, *In the Ukraine*, which begins in the homeland but ends in the murk of a Siberian concentration camp in the Kolyma district. Genocide—by Hitler and Stalin respectively—gives grim reality to both Rogel and Ukrayinets. Devotional poetry of fine religious spirit

is found, along with prose passages, in the religious volume, *On the Pathway of Life,* by the Baptist pastor, M. Podworniak, of Winnipeg. By way of contrast, this year's Icelandic output of verse is limited to periodical publications. In the *Annual* of the National League one may mention poems by Th. Th. Thorsteinsson and Páll S. Pálsson.

In prose fiction, the Ukrainians have the field almost entirely to themselves. The one exception is a tendencious novel, *Lost Sons,* by the Mennonite author, Peter J. Klassen, on the old theme of non-combatantcy, ending effectively with the return and marriage of one of the prodigals. The Ukrainian Book Club of Winnipeg has been publishing a striking series of volumes of reprint fiction, which include the following: *Through the Centuries,* by Yurij Tys, six historical stories ranging from ancient Greece to modern times; *Homo Submissive,* by Leonid Mosendz, ten stories with equally varied settings; *Frontiers Fall,* by Ivan Smolij, a novel of recent times in the U.S.S.R., permeated by the N.K.V.D.; and *People in the Net,* by Vasil Chaplenko, a satirical novel, not without its O.G.P.U. Another reprint is *The Kaydashov Family,* a novel by the nineteenth-century man of letters, Ivan Nechui-Levits'kyj.

Drama is a minor product. Mention has already been made of Ivan Ukrayinets' bitter verse drama on Soviet tyranny and Ukrainian martyrdom. In a much quieter vein is Arnold Dyck's *The Inspection,* a Plattdeutsch sequel to *Welcome to the Forest,* already mentioned in the 1950 survey. There is the same mild humour among the Mennonite recruits in nineteenth-century Russia, a far cry from the apocalyptic terror of Marxism-Leninism. Still another drama is J. J. Pálsson's Icelandic *Windfall,* in the *Annual* of the National League, which with its symbolism and underlying intellectualism is still further removed from the realism of a Stalinist world.

Literary criticism is found in important essays by Dr. Richard Beck on Tómas Gudmundsson and Gudmundur Frímann, both in Icelandic. Of greater dimensions and importance is Dr. Leonid Bilets'kyj's Ukrainian volume, *Three Silhouettes,* dedicated to the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada and giving an extensive and timely analysis of the Ukraine's three chief women writers, "Marko Vovchok" (Maria Markovychka), Ol'ha Kobylyanska, and Lesya Ukrayinka. Pavlo Macenko of Winnipeg has published a compendious tribute to two important Ukrainian composers of the eighteenth century—Dmytro Stepanovych Bortnyans'kyj and Maksym Sozontovych Berezovs'kyj. Finally, incidental to the Communist unveiling of a Soviet statue to the poet and artist, Taras Shevchenko (1814–61), at Palermo, Ontario, John Weir-Wevursky has written an attractive little

volume, *Bard of Ukraine,* in which his own slanted comment on Shevchenko and translations from his verse are illustrated by a large number of the poet's own paintings.

In the year's New-Canadian work in history, first place goes to volume IV of the monumental *Story of the Icelanders in North America.* The details of settlement in the Argyle district and the Lundar district of Manitoba are provided mainly by G. J. Oleson and Heimir Thorgrimsson respectively, but the really important part of the book is the general survey of the "Leifur Period," written by the general editor, Dr. Tryggvi Oleson, Professor of Mediaeval History in the University of Manitoba. Here the splendid achievements and base animosities of the community are both set down with candid finality. Of almost equal importance is *The Molotschna Settlement* by H. Goerz, a full account of a Mennonite colony in southern Russia, from its beginnings in 1803 until its final tragic evacuations in 1924 and 1943. The achievements and solid character of the settlement are fully documented. Mr. Goerz has deserved well of his people.

Of minor scope but genuine interest are several smaller historical works: the essays on Icelandic history in the Thorgeirson *Almanac;* the monograph by the Metropolitan Ilarion, showing that the early Ukrainian prince Volodymyr was Orthodox and not Catholic; the same author's very full essay on the peculiar form taken by the Cross in Ukrainian religious history; Professor George W. Simpson's brochure on the historical background of the names "Rus," "Russia," and "Ukraine"; Professor Rudnyckyj's detailed survey of *The Term and Name "Ukraine";* and Dr. V. J. Kaye-Kysilevs'kyj's outline of *Slavic Groups in Canada.* The last three of these were issued by the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences.

Three volumes are of special interest to schools. These are J. W. Stechishin's *Ukrainian Grammar,* prepared on orthodox lines with very full exercises, paradigms, and vocabularies, Dr. J. B. Rudnyckyj's *Readings in Ukrainian Folklore,* designed for use in his language classes in the University of Manitoba, and the same author's full onomastic study of *Canadian Place Names of Ukrainian Origin.*

Cognate with history but more truly a study of Jewish culture is N. Shemen's *Lublin, City of Torah, Rabbinism and Piety.* Over five hundred pages are devoted to the study of this "Jerusalem of Poland." Part I is largely an historical sketch; Part II deals with "the epoch of Pipul" (or sophistry) as initiated by Rabbi Jacob Pollack and dealt with later by the Maharshal and Maharam; while Part III surveys three rabbis of the "Eiger dynasty." It is an imposing study. Contemporary realism rather than studious research characterizes Paul Trep-

man's *An Alley in Warsaw,* with its glimpses of tragedy in World War II.

Bessie W. Batist has edited *A Treasure for my Daughter,* supplying the young Canadian Jewess not only with the traditions and beliefs of the Jewish faith but with hundreds of recipes for Jewish dishes for special seasons and occasions. To a Gentile the range of cookery is most impressive. A Jewish volume of a totally different type is Moishe Dickstein's *From Palestine to Israel,* originally sent as Yiddish reports to the *Canadian Jewish Eagle,* Montreal, and now translated into English by A. M. Klein. It tells the story of a journalistic visit to the new state of Israel in 1950 and the profound impression made by the new state on an ardent Zionist. Mr. Dickstein concludes: "The dominant thought which I carried away from Israel, therefore, was this interrelation of all Jewry with the great consummation of our time. We of Canadian and American Jewry have a stake in that land; our efforts helped to build it; its existence helped to give us a new dignity and status."

Only one volume in the year's output is a direct polemic in the field of world politics. This is Nicholas Prychodko's *Moscow's Drive for World Domination.* Its most valuable feature is its criticism of the ineptitude of the "Voice of America" broadcasts to the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

Not previously mentioned in these surveys are the Metropolitan Ilarion's personal translations of the New Testament and the Psalter into the Ukrainian language. This is a major achievement.

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REVIEWS

A GREAT SCIENTIST*

H. WASTENEYS

This is a glorious book. It is a vivid story of the life and work of a great Russian physiologist written by a friend and disciple who gave the best years of his life wholeheartedly to Canada and was one of her most inspiring and productive workers in physiological research. It is a monument to the nobility not alone of Pavlov but also of his biographer.

The purely biographical portion of the book is reminiscent of the works of some Russian novelist and is entirely Slavic in its temper. For three years Pavlov was in love with Sara Vasilievna (who became his wife) but was too shy to tell her so though he finally, as she was leaving St. Petersburg, summoned up courage to propose to her, and was accepted. On a subsequent visit to St. Petersburg, Sara gave all her money to Pavlov except enough to buy a pair of shoes. Pavlov spent all this money, and all his own, on her entertainment and she had to borrow the money for her return fare. On reaching her destination she sought in her trunk for her new shoes. She could find only one and immediately wrote to Pavlov who replied, "Don't look for your shoe, I took it as a remembrance of you and have put it on my desk"! For the first ten years of their married life the Pavlovs suffered abject poverty, but they were both idealists and remained so to the end. Eventually Pavlov became a popular professor of physiology in the Military Medical Academy, but resigned in 1924 because the Bolshevist authorities barred the children of the clergy from higher education. Pavlov himself was the son of a clergyman. He had always the courage of his convictions and rated independence, says Babkin, higher than any other human attribute. After Babkin had suffered severely at the hands of the Bolshevists and had left Russia, he was invited, none the less, to return, but had refused. On his appointment to the chair of Physiology at Dalhousie University Pavlov wrote to congratulate him: "I am happy that you have at last found a position . . . because this has come to a person who has kept his personal integrity intact, for, having received an insult you kept sternly remembering it and refused to return to Russia in spite of all offers at a time when your position was very hard abroad. I am amazed at the absence of this feeling of

*_Pavlov: A Biography_. By B. P. BABKIN. Chicago: University of Chicago Press [Toronto: W. J. Gage & Co.]. 1949. Pp. 365. $6.00.

integrity in those around me. A person is thrown once, twice, three times into jail, chained like a dog but he soon forgets this and seems to be unaware that he has been insulted. . . ."

Pavlov was indifferent to honours and rank. Once when entertaining a celebrated visiting Scandinavian physiologist, Pavlov's two small sons appeared, one wearing the Stanislav Star and the other the Stanislav ribbon. He had given his decorations to his children to play with. On another occasion, due at a meeting of the Academy of Science, he had to leave the completion of an operation to Babkin.

> With his coat on and ready to leave for the Academy Pavlov stopped to take a look at the operation. "Are you almost through with the operation?" he asked me. "Not yet," I [Babkin] answered; the wound had to be reopened on account of hemorrhage. "Well done," he commented, and remained standing there deep in thought. The next minute he began to abuse the Academy, exclaiming bitterly, "I did not ask them to elect me. Attending these conferences only distracts a man from his work. Wait for me." So saying he disappeared. He quickly returned wearing an operating gown and after washing his hands completed the operation.

Pavlov was evidently an exacting and often exasperating, albeit inspiring, teacher. He rarely praised his colleagues, holding, says Babkin that "if you praise a Russian he will at once become conceited and spoiled." His integrity was beyond dispute and he was ready to accept a well-established scientific truth no matter how damaging it might be to his own opinions. Babkin recounts how Pavlov immediately accepted the demonstration by Bayliss and Starling of the first hormone to be discovered (secretin), although it "shattered the very foundations" of concepts held in his laboratory.

The scientific idealism of Pavlov is illustrated by this extract from a message he sent to an organization of Russian Youth (the Komsomol) during his last illness. It is, says Babkin, a legacy to students, not to Russian students only but to students of all lands.

> First study the rudiments of science before attempting to reach its heights. Never pass on to the next stage until you have thoroughly mastered the one on hand. Never try to conceal the defects in your knowledge even by the most daring conjectures and hypotheses. Practice self-restraint and patience. Learn to do the drudgery of scientific work. Although a bird's wing is perfect, the bird could never soar if it did not lean upon the air. Facts are the air on which the scientist leans. Without them you will never fly upward. Without them your theories will be mere empty efforts. . . .
>
> The second important requisite is modesty. . . . Have the courage to say to yourself, "I am ignorant," do not let pride possess you.
>
> The third thing that is necessary is passion. Remember that science

demands of a man his whole life. . . . Be passionate in your work and in your search for truth.

Pavlov believed the Bolshevist Revolution to have been the greatest misfortune sustained by Russia. He once expressed his feelings during a public lecture by saying: "If that which the Bolsheviks are doing with Russia is an experiment, for such an experiment I should regret giving even a frog." Although he did not hesitate to criticize the Bolshevists in the first sixteen years of their régime, his "scientific prestige at home and abroad stood so high that he enjoyed complete immunity from prosecution." For three or four years before his death "he apparently betrayed the convictions of his whole life and approved that against which he had so resolutely rebelled previously." A chapter is devoted to a discussion of the reasons for Pavlov's changed attitude towards the Bolsheviks. The conclusion seems to be that their "apparent" support of science was the main factor in the reconciliation. Babkin insists, however, that this support was only "apparent" and gives, in proof, a detailed account of the Lysenko controversy. He believes that the data which substantiate the assertion that Pavlov finally "recognized the Bolsheviks as the best Russian national authority" are insufficient. To Pavlov, he says, "no kind of organisation of society could be acceptable in which there was not personal freedom and in which a small group of people had power over all the rest."

Of Pavlov's scientific achievements, which Babkin describes with great clarity, those of most interest to the layman are concerned with the physiology of the gastrointestinal tract and with conditioned reflexes. Babkin describes how Pavlov demonstrated that the old theory of the general excitability of the salivary glands must be replaced by a study of their qualitative and quantitative response to different stimuli, that the secretion of the gastric glands is controlled by the vagus nerve, and how, through his use of aseptic surgery, his device of the Pavlov gastric pouch, his method of determining the function of specific nerves by electrical stimulation after partial degeneration and other new experimental procedures, he gave us our modern picture of the physiology of gastric secretion and particularly of the three main phases—nervous, pyloric, and intestinal secretion. These researches, together with others, were related in his *Lectures on the Work of the Principal Digestive Glands,* published in St. Petersburg in 1897, and in an English translation (by W. H. Thompson) in 1902. It is not difficult, says Babkin, to see "how the small book fascinated Pavlov's contemporaries. . . . His theoretical conceptions may be replaced . . . but most of the facts established will remain as a permanent acquisition of science and as a testimony to his genius."

In 1904, Pavlov was awarded a Nobel Prize for the Medical Sciences, the first physiologist to receive one. Unhappily, the money he received with the prize ($36,000) was lost, through Bolshevist action, in the 1917 revolution.

Pavlov is best known, of course, for his work on conditioned reflexes which occupied the last thirty-four years of his life. "Reflexes" are the responses of animals to internal or external stimuli. Conditioned reflexes are those acquired by an animal during life. Pavlov used these conditioned reflexes for the study of the physiology of the cerebral cortex, the seat of psychic activity of the animal, in order to build a physiological basis for psychic phenomena and regarded his work in this field as his greatest scientific achievement. Babkin devotes two chapters to an explanation of Pavlov's right to "reject altogether the accepted psychological interpretation of the behaviour of such a highly organised animal as a dog and replace it by what he called an objective study of the higher nervous activity." Pavlov's work indeed provided a method for the objective study of psychological processes which has not been exploited as fully as it might have been by neurophysiologists. Babkin says he knows of only one investigator outside Russia, Dr. W. H. Gantt of Johns Hopkins University who has taken advantage of the reflex on which Pavlov did most of his work, viz. the salivary conditioned reflex, for the study of cortical processes in the dog. Babkin quotes from a letter written to him by Professor K. S. Lashley in 1946. "Although Pavlov pointed the way to fundamental investigation of the physiology of the brain, this way, unfortunately, was not followed systematically in America. . . . Paradoxically, many psychologists in whose current work the influence of Pavlov's theories can be most clearly traced have turned to the development of conceptual systems from which all neurological interpretations are rigorously excluded. . . . All this is no fault of Pavlov. He was one of the great pioneers in experimenting and inductive reasoning. . . ."

One of the most interesting chapters of the book is the last, in which Babkin shows how Pavlov's work is related to the more modern "remarkable work of Penfield confirmed by Le Beau" on the localization of "consciousness" in the brain.

Dr. Babkin's biography of his great teacher is a stimulating and inspiring record of a noble and productive life devoted to medical science. It is the last of many contributions Babkin made to Canadian culture in payment of the debt which, he felt deeply, he owed to the country which enabled him to fulfil his destiny. None the less he was, and remained to the end, a Russian patriot. This is evidenced by his

dedication of the book, reproduced in Russian script with an English translation, "To Thy Memory, My Country, and the Shades of Thy Great Builders."

THE TRIUMPHS OF JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN* F. H. UNDERHILL

Mr. Julian Amery here continues the official biography of Chamberlain of which three volumes were completed by the late J. L. Garvin. This present volume carries on the story to 1903, and there is to be a fifth and final volume in due course. Mr. Amery has given us by all odds the most fascinating study of British politics that has been published in recent years, with the possible exception of Mr. Churchill's war memoirs. It deals with Chamberlain at the height of his power, victory in the Boer War now secure in his hands and the great defeat over Tariff Reform not yet looming up over the horizon. But one of the things that increases our fascination is the skill with which the author, in the midst of his descriptions of Chamberlain's triumphs, works in little premonitions of the disaster to come. The book takes a long time to tell the story of three years, but it holds the reader's attention throughout because the author's style is immensely superior to Garvin's windy and wordy rhetoric.

The volume is divided into five sections: War and Peace in South Africa, The Diplomatic Revolution in Europe (Britain's turning from Germany to France), Studies in Policy and Administration (Birmingham University, tropical medicine, the West Indies, Zionism), Chamberlain's Visit to South Africa, and The Origins of Tariff Reform. Of these the most interesting to a Canadian reader is the last. But one is constantly coming across striking passages. For example, here are Mr. Amery's speculations on what might have come out of an Anglo-German alliance:

> Chamberlain's last bid for a German alliance marks one of the great turning-points in history. Had it prospered, the fate of mankind . . . might have been altered immeasurably and for the better. The greatest sea-power in the world would have been allied to the greatest military power. . . . The general support of the United States would scarcely have been withheld. Such a constellation would have been inclined by its interests and enabled by its power to control the inevitable revolutions in the world's affairs. The golden era of the nineteenth century might have been indefinitely prolonged; and the advancing forces of civilisation might have continued to hold off the horsemen of the Apocalypse. . . . The Germans might have gained in peace the supremacy which they would fail to win

**The Life of Joseph Chamberlain.* Volume IV, *1901–1903, At the Height of His Power.* By JULIAN AMERY. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited [Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited]. Pp. xvi, 533. $6.50.

in war. Had they taken their share of China, Morocco and the Middle East, in concert with Britain, they must have cut off our line of retreat to the Dual Alliance. Meanwhile, their fleet would have increased and their trade expanded to a point where Germany might have become the dominant partner in the Anglo-German combination.

It has been fortunate for the democracies that German diplomacy has always been so impatient; but this has rather unfitted us today for dealing skilfully with the most patient diplomats in the world.

Mr. Amery is very good, considering that he writes as the son of L. S. Amery, one of Chamberlain's chief lieutenants, in pointing out the weakness of Chamberlain's position in these years when he seemed to be at the height of his career. The balance of power within the Unionist Government was going more and more against him; and on Salisbury's retirement he yielded the prime ministership to Balfour practically without a struggle. More serious, he was losing his hold on the British democracy. In 1902 he sacrificed his non-conformist friends over the Education Act. He had become strangely passive about social questions; and, as Mr. Amery puts it, "After a long spell of circuses, the British Democracy was again hungry for bread. The failure to provide it would be fatal to Unionism."

Mr. Amery's account of Chamberlain's negotiations over the corn duty in 1902 and of his efforts to have this continued, so that Britain could give a preference under it to the Dominions, throws a considerable light on this period of Canadian history. At the Colonial Conference of 1902 Chamberlain was greatly impressed by Laurier and Fielding. He found that the Canadian delegates demolished the figures which had been supplied to him by the British financial experts to prove that the Canadian preference was not worth much to British exporters, and "his faith in the Board of Trade was permanently impaired." Fielding pressed him hard to do something in the way of a reciprocal preference before the next Canadian budget had to be brought in. If Mr. Amery's picture is correct, the Laurier Government at this moment would seem to have been much more sincerely interested in a system of mutual preferences than one would gather from Skelton's *Life of Laurier*—or than one would gather from Professor Hewins's account (in his *Apologia of an Imperialist*) of his later visit to Ottawa when he went on a private mission as head of Chamberlain's brain trust and found Laurier, Fielding, and Mulock immovable.

Mr. Amery's interpretation of the whole preference business is at any rate most interesting. "The colonies wanted not federation, with the surrender of power to Downing Street which it would have implied, but co-operation; equality, not so much between individual British

subjects, as between the different British nations. . . . At bottom . . . it was a constitutional question, not one of economics. . . . The colonies wanted full nationhood within the empire . . . a permanent alliance of the British nations operative in every sphere of life. . . . Preferences thus came to symbolise a new constitutional relationship—the Commonwealth relationship as we have since learned to call it." This is suggestive, but it hardly allows enough for the deep-rooted economic nationalism of Canada. And Chamberlain did sense that Laurier was not really on his side: "I do not entirely trust Laurier. His ideal is an independent Canada and he is certainly not an imperialist in our sense." When Chamberlain proposed a change in the royal title on the accession of Edward VII, he would have added "and of Greater Britain beyond the seas." Imagine proposing a title like that to a French-Canadian premier of Canada or to a Boer premier of South Africa! Mr. Amery stresses the imaginative powers of Chamberlain, but it is evident that his understanding of people who differed from the pushing business men of Birmingham was distinctly limited. And perhaps Mr. Amery himself does not quite appreciate the full extent of the nationalism of such communities as Canada and South Africa. His account of Chamberlain's visit to South Africa after the war, with the Colonial Secretary sternly and objectively distributing praise or blame to the vanquished, reads strangely today in 1952 when every despatch from that part of the world makes it clear that the present governing group in South Africa are determined to demonstrate that it was the Boers who won the Boer War.

Still this is a fascinating volume. It concludes with Chamberlain at the age of sixty-six, an old man in a hurry, about to embark on his last great campaign for Tariff Reform. "Too old? Perhaps. And yet it was only now that he reached his full maturity. . . . The last lingering restraints had been abandoned. There would be a broadening of character and a new stirring of imagination. . . . With the strength of maturity might also go its weakness. Prudence would decline as self-confidence grew. Judgment would be impaired by the very brightness of vision. The edge of persuasion would be dulled by the habit of command."

KANTIAN RATIONALISM* — T. A. GOUDGE

The philosophy of Kant continues to be an important influence on contemporary thought. In recent years a number of leading scientists such as Eddington, Einstein, and von Weizsäcker have expressed

*_In Defence of Reason_. By H. J. PATON. London: Hutchinson's University Library [Toronto: The Ryerson Press]. 1951. Pp. 288. $4.00.

sympathy with the Kantian theory of knowledge. While the dominant attitude among philosophers has been one of hostility, there are certain notable exceptions, not the least of whom is Professor H. J. Paton of Oxford. His three books, *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience* (1936), *The Categorical Imperative* (1947), and *The Moral Law* (1949), have made him the leading exponent and defender of Kant in the English-speaking world. Now he has brought out a volume of essays, some of which have previously appeared, wherein he continues his campaign to demonstrate the abiding value of the Kantian philosophy. Since the central theme of this philosophy is the power of reason in human life, Professor Paton has given the volume its present title. We thus have the interesting spectacle of an Oxford philosopher who holds, despite Professor Ryle and his followers, that talk about Kant is more important than "talk about talk."

The essays fall into three groups. The first group is devoted to expounding and clarifying doctrines that are vital to Kant's epistemology and moral theory. Here the discussion becomes rather technical and is likely to be of value only to specialists. The second group of essays includes several attempts to deal with philosophical problems in the light of Kantian principles. Such topics as "Self-Identity," "Can Reason be Practical?" and "Justice among Nations" are treated in a lucid and thought-provoking manner. Finally, there are two essays of a more general sort, Professor Paton's inaugural lecture "Fashion and Philosophy," and a hitherto unpublished essay entitled "Existentialism as an Attitude to Life." All the papers are written in an easy, flexible style which makes agreeable reading.

The great strength of Kant's philosophy for Professor Paton lies in the fact that it regards human reason as the source of ultimate principles or laws which are exemplified in the domains of knowledge and action. In so far as knowledge is concerned, this approach allows full weight to be given to sense-experience without leading to the conclusion that laws are merely pragmatically useful summaries of sense-data. A non-positivistic conception of laws as universal and necessary features of the experienced world can then be defended. Likewise, in the case of human conduct the Kantian position implies that *qua* rational being man wills his action as falling under a law whose origin lies within himself. Morality is thereby rescued from the clutches of subjectivism and relativism, while at the same time the irreducible difference between thinking and acting morally is not glossed over. Professor Paton goes even farther than this. He contends that it is possible to hold that goodness, for example, "is objective and independent of the whims and fancies, the impulses and desires, of individual men,

and also to hold that the goodness of a thing may vary in different circumstances and must stand in some necessary relation to a rational will" (p. 178). These are the basic ideas emphasized throughout the book.

Professor Paton is at his best when making a frontal attack on a philosophical problem, for example, in his essay on self-identity. This essay has the merit of bringing into focus a question which even so penetrating a work as Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* does not face squarely. The question is whether an adequate account of knowledge can be given without including the notion of a self which is identical in its various acts of knowing. Paton contends that the notion of self-identity *must* be introduced in order to make possible the knowledge we have of successive events in time, and also the knowledge which is based on memory. Thus, when I hear a clock striking twelve, I know that twelve distinct sounds have succeeded one another. But unless there were a self which remained the same throughout this process, I could never grasp the distinct sounds as parts of *one* series, i.e. as twelve strokes. Similarly, when I remember that I have seen the Elgin Marbles, the remembering implicitly involves the claim that the "I" here is an identical subject. "In order to remember my seeing, or what I saw, I must be the same in both the act of seeing and the act of remembering" (p. 111). Otherwise, no memory knowledge would be possible. This, in rough outline, is the manner in which Paton argues, a manner very reminiscent of Kant. Like Kant, he has no desire to espouse the view that the knowing self is a substance or a timeless reality. But he does insist that the self's identity is an inescapable presupposition of knowledge.

In the essays which expound and defend specific Kantian doctrines, Professor Paton is rather less effective. Here he is extremely eager to acquit Kant of the charge of inconsistency and confusion of thought. Heroic measures are often needed to make the acquittal plausible; and the reader may be forgiven if he finds the discussion unconvincing. One may perfectly well agree that Kant had the heart of the matter in him, without implying that he never got into a muddle on vital issues. It is a pity that Professor Paton does not devote less space to an expository defence of Kant's doctrines, and more space to an evaluation of his arguments. For Kant is *par excellence* a philosopher who *argues* for the truth of his conclusions; and many of his arguments are so complex that it is hard to determine whether they do actually justify the conclusions he affirms. On this matter the present book has hardly anything to say.

Yet Professor Paton has certainly made an impressive case for

Kantian rationalism. His essays should, therefore, be of interest to all those who hold that traditional metaphysics is a pseudo-science, that "only in experience is there truth," and that man's rational powers are his supreme possession.

SHORTER NOTICES

Robert Burns. By DAVID DAICHES. New York: Rinehart & Company. Rinehart Critical Studies. 1950. Pp. viii, 376. $2.00, college ed.; $3.50, trade ed.

Of late years Scotsmen have been wrangling with each other over the reassessment of their literature; and one loud cry has been to get beyond Burns and back to the older Scottish "makars." Professor Daiches, himself Scottish-bred, is well aware of this; and perhaps the most valuable aspect of his examination of Burns's achievement is the convincing argument, not new but in need of emphatic reassertion, that Burns's best poetry is essentially aligned to the healthy native traditions, both folk and literary. Only when he was lured to imitate the English neo-classic manner and to please the genteel taste of the time did Burns fall to the commonplace.

Yet, despite this insistence on the link between Burns and his Scottish predecessors, Professor Daiches' book is not primarily an historical study. After an opening survey of "The Scottish Literary Tradition" he has a biographical chapter entitled "Growth of a Poet"; and it is of the poet he writes, not of the supposed personal failings which, because Burns was a peasant and not a man of fashion, have been so often and so needlessly paraded or smugly decried by his biographers. There is a brief account of the Edinburgh visit in 1786; and the remaining chapters, the core of the book, deal in detail with the poetry: the Kilmarnock volume, the pieces omitted from that edition, the later poems, and the songs which Burns gave or adapted without recompense for the collections of Johnson and Thomson. This detailed commentary on the poems varies in kind and value from a revealing analysis of the subtleties of Burns's art to a rather pedestrian method of paraphrase. The finest of the songs, as Professor Daiches acknowledges, yield little to the analytic technique; one has only to hear them sung to realize their uniqueness.

It is interesting that the best recent books on Burns have come from the American universities. With this volume, written during his stay in the United States, Professor Daiches has added another to the list.

R. S. KNOX

Sir Thomas Browne: A Study in Religious Philosophy. By WILLIAM P. DUNN. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press [Toronto: Thomas Allen Limited]. 1950. Pp. viii, 182. $3.50.

Since its publication in 1926 Professor Dunn has rewritten and recast this book so considerably that it is to be regarded as something more than the usual "second edition, revised." In his attitude to Browne as a scientist and writer, however, he seems unable to shake off certain common nineteenth-century misconceptions, including even some of the follies of Gosse. Indeed he repeats as he seems to disclaim, as when Coleridge's epithet "faery light" dances before his modern eyes or when the author of *Urn Burial* is praised as "no mere quaint writer of prose meditations."

Almost at the outset the *Vulgar Errors* is described as "the twilight of the mediaeval gods," and "as through a falling darkness" Professor Dunn views "one of the last imposing processions of the great figures of old-world science—Aristotle, Galen, Hippocrates, Pliny, Augustine, Dioscorides, Bartholomew, Albertus Magnus. With a very learned and naive admiration Browne sees the physical world through their eyes, and when he studies animals and plants and stars he enters their fairyland of monsters and prodigies and legendary tales and pious frauds. He has all their encyclopedic industry, all their credulity, all their lack of method, all their undisciplined curiosity." "Their" seems to be applied here with a certain lack of discrimination, and Browne's actual comment on Albertus Magnus and Bartholomew Glanvil is that they have "delivered most conceits with strict enquiry into few." Later in the book Professor Dunn admits that his view has been challenged, but still persists in comparing Browne to a "rhapsodic monk" who "sees everything through a cloud of mystical emotion." This is nonsense whether applied to Browne or monks with an interest in natural history.

But indeed the difficulty some critics have in writing relevantly about the so-called "world of Sir Thomas Browne" is illustrated in Professor Dunn's first paragraph, which runs:

> For the follower of intellectual byways in seventeenth-century England, no figure is more provocative and rewarding than Sir Thomas Browne. As antiquary, embryo naturalist, enlightened physician, restlessly speculative philosopher, he is an enduring personality whose name is inextricably woven into the life of Bacon, Gilbert and Harvey. . . . He is one of the truest mirrors of that age . . . to the extent that he shows such superb genius for handling knowledge imaginatively he is one of the greatest men. . . . *Religio Medici* and *Urn Burial* and *The Garden of Cyrus* are now fixed stars, only less than the brightest in the English sky.

But the astonishing genius of the writer is probably hidden from most of his readers. . . .

You meet Browne in a byway; you forcibly transfer him to your highway; deciding that you have made a mistake you pluck him out and set him to shine in the sky; then you say his light is hidden. And after that you elaborate a good deal on various aspects of the background of thought in his time—Baconian, Cartesian, Platonic. There are times when it is impossible not to wish that backgrounds could be daubed over and frameworks broken up to let the individual be seen.

The best parts of this book are the two last chapters, on Browne's view of nature as the art of God, and man as the great amphibium. It seems to this reviewer surprising to speak of Browne's "peculiarly sombre and morbid cast of thought," but Professor Dunn writes pleasantly and interestingly about the general character of Browne's mind and imagination, and attempts an extended analysis of two or three significant passages. The evidence for an earlier statement that "undoubtedly the commonest epithet" for the author of *Religio Medici* was "atheist" should be indicated. I believe the evidence is clearly the contrary, as can be seen by the European prefaces and annotations.

N. J. Endicott

Philosophy of Nature. By Jacques Maritain. New York: Philosophical Library. 1951. Pp. x, 198. $3.00.

Aristotle divided all philosophy into two branches, the practical and the theoretical. The practical includes ethics, the theoretical he subdivided into physics, mathematics, and metaphysics. The theoretical he deemed superior, for it embraces all of what may strictly be called knowledge. Today most sciences have broken away from philosophy. Descartes was symptomatic of the change which brought this about. He sought to reform philosophy for a practical goal, to make man the master of nature. The culmination was to be an ethics; ethics, as with the Stoics, would embrace the whole of philosophy. This effort found no fulfilment beyond Spinoza. Descartes is better remembered for his doctrine of method. For in the eighteenth century the distinction came to be made between philosophy and science; the part of the seventeenth-century effort which was successful was called science, physics. Prior to this time one might be a Platonist or an Aristotelian in physics. The new physics was neutral, a science everyone must accept regardless of his philosophic leanings. It was a branch of knowledge apart from philosophy, impoverishing philosophy, and authoritative for philosophy.

This divorce has had profound consequences. Physics, not ethics, became fundamental. Once it was detached from philosophy, many have hoped that physics could absorb all of philosophy, that all sciences could be treated as sciences of nature and physical reality as the only reality. For what had been left was called "mental and moral philosophy." Others have sought to subject this remnant also to scientific treatment. To complete the reform initiated by Descartes, Comte held that every field of inquiry must follow the path physics had taken. It must abandon traditional methods, and develop an authoritative body of knowledge, independent of philosophy, which everyone must accept whatever his philosophic tendencies. With this aim, psychology and the social sciences have more recently broken away from philosophy. With this, too, the distinction between the theoretical and the practical has been forgotten; only theoretical investigation is acknowledged.

What is left today for philosophy? Some say, nothing; some say its task is to study the concepts and methods of the sciences. What place can there be today for a philosophy of nature? This is the question Professor Maritain deals with in the present work. Professor Maritain is a Thomist. Thomists would like philosophy to be restored to her comprehensive role. They claim that the doctrines of Aquinas are of philosophic significance today. Whether or not this claim is sound, few Thomists try to substantiate it. Instead, most of them devote themselves to tracing the origins of St. Thomas's teachings or to purging them of later accretions. Most Thomists are concerned with philosophic matters, but their concern is of an historical rather than philosophic sort.

Maritain, however, arouses the hope of finding a Thomist pursuing a philosophic interest. His present book is a study not in but about the philosophy of nature. Maritain tries to make out a place for the philosophy of nature by distinguishing it from metaphysics on the one hand and from the natural sciences on the other hand. What is surprising is that he attempts throughout to do this by means of the classic principle by which Aristotle distinguished physics from mathematics and metaphysics. What he achieves is very disappointing. Maritain fails to show whether there are any important questions about nature which cannot be answered by the natural sciences yet which can be dealt with by some other investigation. Instead, he develops Aristotle's trichotomy by tediously adapting interpretations upon it by late scholastics of the generations before Descartes. The philosophic discussion he promises turns out to be only an apologetic for archaic teachings.

DOUGLAS P. DRYER

Sherwood Anderson, His Life and Work. By JAMES SCHEVILL. Denver, Colo.: The University of Denver Press [Toronto: Burns & MacEachern]. 1951. Pp. xvi, 360. $5.50.

Professor Schevill is the sort of biographer who is never content with saying the best about his subject. He reminds us, justly, that the stories in *Winesburg, Ohio* were all influential, and that some of them are still very readable. But he goes on to insist that we accept this book as "a vital, illuminating, superbly formed American classic." More—we are to consider *Poor White* and the unfinished *Memoirs* as work of the same high quality. Again, it is not enough to think of Anderson as a myth-maker, able "to strike many subtle overtones from a simple theme." No, we must believe he was "the first important American psychological writer in the twentieth century, revitalizing the tradition of Hawthorne and Melville." *Où sont les neiges d'*Henry James?

It is true that Professor Schevill admits Anderson's faults as a writer: his inability to stick to facts even when his intention demanded them; his careless craftsmanship; his intellectual naïveté and emotional instability. But the biographer does not really regard these faults as serious. Some of them, indeed, he imitates; his style is as repetitive and humourless as Anderson's, and his psychologizings are even more superficial.

What is probably most valuable about this book is its inclusion of previously unpublished Anderson letters to Professor Schevill's historian father. In these Anderson has expressed, more movingly perhaps than in any of his published works, his sense of the loneliness of the artist's life in this continent of the non-artists. Sometimes in these, too, one catches something of the peculiar appeal of Anderson the man, at least as this reviewer remembers him—that gentle but persistent attitude of love toward his species, that natural goodwill, rare enough in contemporary American writing, for which one cherishes him, even though his books fade.

EARLE BIRNEY

A History of the Crusades. Volume I. *The First Crusade and the Foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.* By STEVEN RUNCIMAN. London: Cambridge University Press [Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited]. 1951. Pp. x, 360. $6.50.

This book is the first of three volumes which will deal with the whole Crusading movement. With its appearance, the English-speaking reader is at last freed from dependence on German and French histories for a full and scholarly account of the subject. By forestalling

the great American composite work which will no doubt be definitive, Mr. Runciman has introduced a welcome taste of that brilliant European rivalry in crusading historiography which enlivened the subject in the past century. However, as Mr. Runciman remarks, the two enterprises will be complementary rather than competitive. He does not seek to pit himself against the "massed typewriters" of the U.S.A. Whereas the latter will supply us with an incomparable work of reference, Mr. Runciman has given us the first instalment of a unified, vigorous, and scholarly narrative.

Crusading history has tended to be written from either an Eastern or a Western standpoint. This book belongs to the former category, with Byzantium rather than Araby as the point of departure. In telling his tale, Mr. Runciman tells us more of the East than of Western motivation. He sets out his theme in five books, each graced with some outstanding contribution. In the first, wherein the history of the Near East from 638 to 1095 is related, it is the elucidation of Byzantine policy in the complex situation of the Balkans and of Asia Minor which stands out. The second book, on "The Preaching of the Crusade," is distinguished by its unravelling of the relations of the Eastern and Western branches of the Church (here the recent tendency to postpone the final rift beyond 1054 receives confirmation). "The Journey to the Wars," the subject of the next section, is remarkable for its sharply drawn portraiture of the Western lay leaders and for its elucidation of their relationships with Alexius. In the fourth book, the mounting tension between high ideals and immediate interests, as the Crusaders drew nearer to their goal, gives to the narrative a gripping quality which derives both from the broad sympathies and from the story-telling power of the writer. Finally, with "The Promised Land," the astonishingly successful climax is described, though perhaps this difficult subject is less convincingly treated than some of the earlier phases of the story.

Throughout his work, the author strives for and achieves coherence and clarity of narrative. To this end, scholarly controversy has been avoided or hidden, and the uninformed reader will hardly realize what fierce disputes rage beneath (and will rage over) some of his assertions. Occasionally, too, the continuity or logic of the story is maintained at the expense of a strict adherence to the evidence, and many specialist scholars will feel that problems which worry them are too easily resolved. These shortcomings are the minimum price to be paid in sustaining a clean-cut historical narrative in the medieval period, and they are all the more acceptable when the author shows such vast erudition and sane judgement as does Mr. Runciman. It is these

qualities which make him an adequate guide not only to the Crusades, but through them (and what better threshold is there?) to the Middle Ages. For here there is no false romanticism, nor is there yet another drab episode in the social habits of "economic man." Here we are introduced to a world of vigorous, wilful, creative soldiers and churchmen, their lesser aims caught up for a moment in one overriding plan, torn increasingly between immediate rewards and ultimate hopes.

M. R. POWICKE

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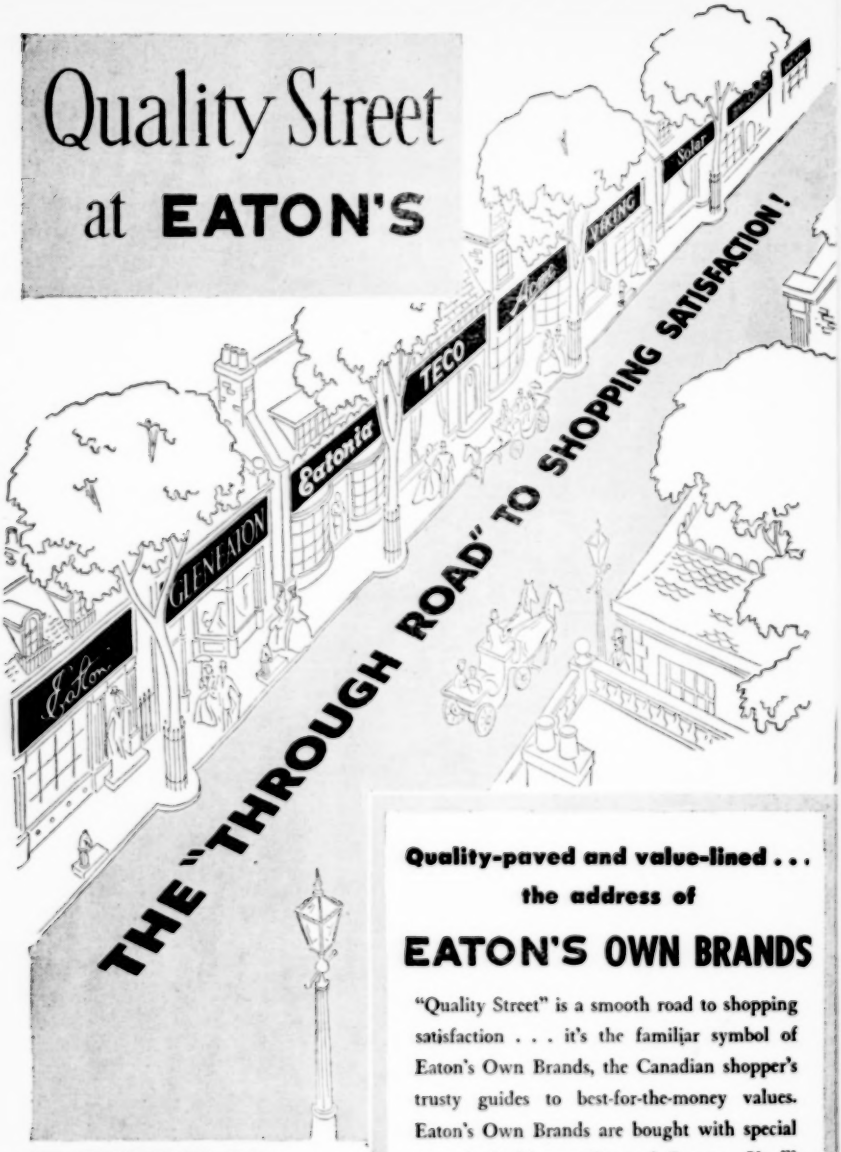

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